

FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend FT

Living with nuclear mess

Stop this endorphin abuse

Working wear in New York

SECTION II

World Business Newspaper

WEEKEND APRIL 13/APRIL 14 1996

Man arrested after probe into IRA's London bombing

A 26-year-old Irishman was being questioned by police in Dublin after a joint operation between British and Irish security forces in the wake of the IRA's February bombing in London's Docklands.

Anglo offered Lomro's shares: UK conglomerate Lomro effectively handed potential future control of its mining interests to South Africa's biggest company, Anglo American Corporation.

French group wins UK rail franchise: A French company is to receive a UK government subsidy of £360m (£547.2m) over the next seven years to run the busy rail commuter network serving south London and the south coast.

US to return Okinawa lands: Japan and the US announced plans to return land used for an air base on Okinawa island to local residents, days before a summit between President Bill Clinton and Japan's prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Clinton meets UK opposition leader: US president Bill Clinton met Britain's opposition Labour party leader Tony Blair in Washington as the ruling Conservative Party's majority in Parliament was reduced to one after a by-election defeat.

Repair work 'caused Dusseldorf fire': The Dusseldorf airport fire in which 16 people died was caused when workmen used hot bitumen to repair a road over the departure lounge, German police said.

China hints at diverting US trade: China hinted it would switch its trade away from the US, and possibly towards Europe, if Washington continued to block its admission to the World Trade Organisation.

Deutsche Telekom, which will raise up to DM15bn (\$10bn) in November through Germany's biggest share issue, denied reports that it is preparing to make a bid for UK-based telecommunications group Cable and Wireless.

Kohl to agree jobs plan: German chancellor Helmut Kohl will meet senior ministers and party officials to agree plans for spending cuts, welfare changes and tax reforms as part of a programme to reduce the country's 4.14m jobless.

London stocks fight off Wall St gloom: London shares regained their poise, helped by the prospect of more take-over bids and relief that Thursday's 70-point slide in the Dow Jones Industrial average proved temporary.

Hong Kong warned over political activists: Hong Kong, claiming it would damage the territory's prospects as an international trade and financial centre.

US orders more ships to Liberia: The US ordered two more ships to head for West Africa to help in its widening military operation to rescue foreigners trapped by fighting in Liberia.

FT book award winners: The winners of the first Financial Times/Book-Allen & Hamilton Global Business Book Awards are Die Deutsche Bank, by Lother Gell, Gerald D. Feldman, Harold James, Carl-Wilhelm Hoffmann and Hans E. Böschen and Intelliscapability by Noboru Kono and Keijiro Nonaka.

Table with 2 columns: Company Name and Share Price/Change. Includes Abbot, Apsa, BET, BNL, BSkyB, BT, British Thomson, CGA Direct, Clark (C&I), Compass, Deutsche Telekom, Euronext France, Ford, Fujitsu, GKN, Goldsmiths.

Table with 2 columns: Index Name and Value/Change. Includes FT-SE 100, FT-SE Eurostock 100, FT-SE-A All-Share, Nikkei, Dow Jones Ind Ave, S & P Composite, US LUNCHTIME RATES, NORTH SEA OIL (Argus), GOLD, LONDON MONEY, 3-mo Interbank, Life long gilt fut.

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Ford spends \$480m to take control of Mazda

By Michyo Nakamoto in Tokyo and Halg Simonian in London

Ford, the world's second biggest carmaker, is spending \$480m (£480m) to raise its stake in Mazda to a controlling 33.4 per cent in the first case of a foreign company taking the wheel at a leading Japanese concern.

Officials at Ford and Mazda, Japan's 8th biggest carmaker, said the move would help to form the strongest carmaking alliance in the world.

Mr Henry Wallace, the Ford executive who has been Mazda's vice-president for two years, will become president, making him the first foreigner to run a top Japanese company. Mr Yoshihiro Wada, Mazda's president since 1992, will take a largely ceremonial role as chairman.

Mr Wayne Booker, Ford's executive vice-president in charge of international operations, said the move was mainly designed to strengthen the two companies in Asia. Ford and Mazda last year announced a big manufacturing venture in Thailand, and Mr Booker suggested other deals might be in the offing.

He said Ford's decision to raise its stake from 25 per cent was partly driven by legal concerns, as the increased co-operation envisaged might have encountered anti-trust barriers had the US company not taken effective control of Mazda.

Mr Booker said Ford and Mazda would now be able to work more closely on product development, component purchasing and manufacturing, and marketing and distribution but neither side has indicated precisely which projects they have in mind.

The deal, which marks the clearest demonstration to date of



Israeli 120mm howitzers on the border with Lebanon fire at Hizbollah targets yesterday

Israel launches new raid on Beirut

By Mark Dennis in Kiryat Shmona, Northern Israel

Israeli helicopters yesterday hit Beirut's southern suburbs for a second day, apparently wounding several Syrian soldiers in a serious escalation of the campaign against the Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas.

The Syrian government did not directly respond to the strike, but official radio broadcasts claimed the main victim of the

fresh attacks would be the Middle East peace process.

Israel said its helicopters had come under fire near Beirut, but did not confirm that it had hit Syrian soldiers - some of the country's estimated 35,000-strong force based in Lebanon.

Together with other air strikes and an extensive artillery bar-

Swiss bank denies claim of 'blackmail' from rival

By Ian Rodger in Zurich

The bitter row between Switzerland's two largest banks, Union Bank of Switzerland and CS Holding, over CS's controversial proposal for exploratory merger talks intensified yesterday as CS Holding dismissed UBS charges of attempted blackmail.

CS Holding officials said their group was in no position to blackmail UBS directors in the run-up to the UBS shareholders' meeting next Tuesday, as it held only a very small number of UBS shares.

On Thursday, UBS directors, who rejected the idea of a merger, suggested Mr Rainer Gut, chairman of CS Holding, had tried to threaten them by asking for a response to his proposal before the shareholders' meeting. It said this request indicated to them that CS Holding might have enough shares to tip the balance in a crucial vote at the meeting.

CS claimed yesterday that Mr Gut had merely suggested that an early response might be helpful to the UBS board in its proxy fight with Mr Martin Ebner, its largest shareholder. CS officials suspected UBS had chosen to interpret its approach aggressively to win more public support for its board's positions.

UBS appeared to have made some progress, as the large Co-op supermarket chain revealed yesterday that shares held by its pension fund would be voted in favour of the board, even though the chief executive, Mr Rolf Leuenberger, called UBS's performance last year inadequate.

Most Zurich bankers believe UBS will attract enough votes to secure the nomination of Mr Robert Studer, the outgoing chief executive, as chairman.

Mr Ebner opposes the nomination, but one of his associates appeared to admit defeat yesterday, saying that he would be

Clinton nominates Kantor as new US commerce chief

By Nancy Durne in Washington

President Bill Clinton yesterday announced that he would appoint Mr Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, to the post of commerce secretary.

Mr Kantor would succeed Mr Ron Brown, who died with 34 others in an aircraft crash in Croatia last week.

Mr Kantor is an unexpected choice for the post. He is widely regarded as a negotiator and as someone who gets things done, rather than as a policymaker.

If his nomination is approved by the Senate, he will have to manage an unwieldy bureaucracy of 35,000 staff.

The appointment comes after a week of mourning, led by the president, for Mr Brown and his

colleagues. Republicans in Congress have been criticised for their absence from the funeral and memorial services.

Mr Brown, a past chairman of the Democratic party, was considered by some to be a political figure.

It is not certain that the Senate would approve Mr Kantor's nomination. Republicans want to dismantle the department, which they consider a prime example of "corporate welfare".

Senator Robert Dole, the Republican party candidate for president, has led the battle against the department - some say more to shore up his conservative credentials than anything else - and he could carry that opposition into a nomination battle. However, Mr Kantor has won wide respect among Republicans

and Democrats for his handling of trade matters.

Numerous proposals have been introduced in Congress over the years to combine the commerce department and the trade representative posts. It is possible a move to combine the two could signal the administration's willingness to create a streamlined department of trade and industry.

President Clinton also announced the appointment of Mr Franklin Raines as director of the Office of Management and Budget. Mr Raines was formerly vice-chairman of the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae).

Mr Raines will replace Ms Alice Rivlin when she becomes vice-chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Table with 4 columns: Index Name, Value, Change, and Description. Includes FT-SE 100, FT-SE Eurostock 100, FT-SE-A All-Share, Nikkei, Dow Jones Ind Ave, S & P Composite, US LUNCHTIME RATES, NORTH SEA OIL (Argus), GOLD, LONDON MONEY, 3-mo Interbank, Life long gilt fut.

Table with 4 columns: Section Name, Page Number, Section Name, Page Number. Includes News, Man in the News, Gold Markets, World Commodities, UK News, UK, London SE, Wall Street, US News, International, LSE Dealings, Boares, Weekend FT, Markets, Managed Funds, Section I, FT-SE Actuaries, Money Markets, Recent Issues, FT/SP-A Wld Index, Foreign Exchanges, Store Information.

Advertisement for County Hall properties. Features a large image of County Hall with 'SOLD' signs. Text includes 'OPEN WEEKEND SAT 13th - SUN 14th APRIL', 'THE ULTIMATE OPPORTUNITY', 'COUNTY HALL', 'SOLD', 'FINAL RELEASE', 'SOLD', 'SOLD', '\$99,000', '\$129,000', 'SALES OFFICE OPEN 7 DAYS 10.30am-5.30pm', 'GALLIARD NATIONAL ENQUIRIES (24 hrs)', 'TELEPHONE: 0171 620 1500', 'FREEPHONE: 0800 54 56 58'.

NEWS: EUROPE

Russian rivals look to church

Yeltsin and Zyuganov become more devout as presidential poll nears

By John Thornhill in Moscow

Inside the newly rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow...

Yeltsin and Zyuganov become more devout as presidential poll nears...

leather jacket, he toured the Sergiev Posad monastery...

great but distinctive world power. In its 74-year reign...



Church's blessing: A Russian Orthodox priest sprinkles some holy water on a new MIG-AT aircraft yesterday before test flights at Zhukovsky airfield near Moscow

Verona meeting hopes to kickstart new ERM

By Gillian Tett and Andrew Hill in Verona

The European Commission hopes preparations for a future exchange rate mechanism will start soon...

Li plays Europe off against US

By David Buchanan in Paris

China yesterday appeared to threaten to switch its trade away from the US...

the Paris chamber of commerce and industry on the fourth day of a visit to France...

in line with its status as a developing country. He pointed out Chinese tariffs had just been substantially reduced...

diplomatic incident this week that nearly derailed an official dinner and the ceremonial signing of the Airbus contract...

atives from GEC-Alsthom, the Franco-British company. The Franco-British company...

EUROPEAN NEWS DIGEST

French prices rise sharply

French consumer prices shot sharply higher in March, giving the first hint in years that inflation, long-dormant in France...

Spanish inflation rate falls

Spain's annual inflation rate slowed sharply last month from 3.7 per cent to 3.4 per cent...

Aznar asked to form cabinet

King Juan Carlos has asked Mr José María Aznar to lead the next Spanish government...

Repair work 'caused airport fire'

The Dusseldorf airport fire in which 16 people died was caused when workers used hot bitumen to repair a road over the runway...

US hopeful on Bosnia cash

US officials were optimistic yesterday that international donors meeting in Brussels would pledge the outstanding \$1.2bn...

Slimline Kohl ready to trim state spending

By Peter Norman in Bonn

Chancellor Helmut Kohl returns from his annual slimming holiday in Bad Hofgastein, Austria...

interests and where there is little evidence that the public or many politicians are prepared to accept a radical restructuring...

Wage restraint and employment on agenda Germans struggle with pay and jobs formula

By Wolfgang Münchau in Frankfurt

A German union leader confessed this week that he and colleagues had "tears in our eyes" when they accepted a deal giving building workers a pay rise of just 1.85 per cent...

IG Metall metalworkers' union, proposed last year. Ironically for Mr Zwickel, the alliance for jobs has so far proved more successful in the chemical and textiles industries...

Over time bonuses are to be abolished and overtime work will have to be compensated with holidays within a month...

Mr Kohl, who pledged to turn the government's 50-point plan to revive the economy...

Set at such a high level, the minimum wage will succeed in its main goal of pricing cheap foreign labour out of the German labour market...

As a framework for this year's wage round the alliance for jobs is here to stay...

Argentina Mining: Investment Opportunities. Conference Wednesday 17 April 1996...

Old politics fails to fire young voters

With elections imminent, Italy's students are more interested in jobs than ideology

Apathy is palpable on the campus of central Italy's Perugia University...

alliance headed by former premier Silvio Berlusconi is scarcely bothering to campaign here...

unemployment has risen alarmingly and is now running at 30 per cent. The jobs issue is crucial and the only one which provokes serious interest among the young in this election...

struggling for political respectability. However, his appeal has more to do with personality than ideology...

THE FINANCIAL TIMES (Europe) Published by The Financial Times (Europe) GmbH...

Handwritten Arabic text: سكذا من الأصل

# US agrees to give up Okinawa air base

By William Dawkins in Tokyo

Japan and the US yesterday announced plans to return land occupied by an air base on the island of Okinawa to local residents, a gesture calculated to defuse local complaints against the largest concentration of US troops in Japan.

The accord is deliberately timed a few days before next Wednesday's summit between Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's prime minister, and US President Bill Clinton, at which they intend to reaffirm

their bilateral security pact, seen by defence planners on both sides of the Pacific as the foundation of security in east Asia.

Mr Clinton said in Washington yesterday that the agreement addressed the "legitimate concerns of the people of Okinawa have about noise levels [and] access to land. I hope we've got a good resolution here that will permit us to defend our own security interests and observe and pursue our interests in the northern Pacific and fulfil our commitments to our Japanese allies."

There will be no reduction in the 47,000 troops based in Japan, of which 28,000 are in Okinawa. The facilities at Futatabi, used by the marine corps, will be transferred to other sites on Okinawa and mainland Japan during the next five to seven years.

Mr Walter Mondale, US ambassador to Japan, stressed that the handover would not weaken US military capability in the region. He said the US security pact with Japan remained important and would be strengthened.

Mr Hashimoto said the decision was an "important achievement" in reducing the US presence in Okinawa. The island 1,000km south of Tokyo has long complained it is unfairly burdened with three-quarters of US bases in Japan. Okinawa saw some of the worst fighting on Japanese territory during the war, when a third of its civilian population died. After the war, the island was requisitioned for bases and returned to Japanese sovereignty in 1972.

Local complaints flared up again and attracted widespread sympathy last September, after the rape of a 12-year-old girl for which three US servicemen have been convicted.

This sparked a rare national debate about desirability of the US military presence. It is one of the reasons for Mr Clinton's visit, originally planned for last November, when feelings were running at their highest, but delayed because of the US budget crisis.

Futenma base, on the south-west of the island, has been a particular focus of complaint because it is near a built-up area, including 16 schools.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DIGEST

# Vietnam warns China over oil

Vietnam yesterday implicitly warned China not to put obstacles in the way of plans to allow Conoco of the US explore for oil and gas in an area of the South China Sea claimed by both countries. "Vietnam has the right to explore and exploit resources in this area by itself or in co-operation with foreign countries," the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry said in a written statement. "Nobody has the right to interfere and obstruct."

The statement followed one issued on Thursday by China's Foreign Ministry stating that Beijing "will never accept any exploration by any country or region in this area that would violate China's sovereignty."

PetroVietnam, Vietnam's state oil company, signed a business co-operation contract on Wednesday with a subsidiary of Houston-based Conoco, allowing it to operate in the same area where China awarded exploration rights to Denver-based Crestone Energy in 1992.

The Vietnamese statement said the area in question, designated Blocks 133 and 134 by Hanoi, lies on Vietnam's continental shelf and falls "totally" within the scope of its sovereignty and jurisdiction under international law.

Conoco has reportedly indicated that it will accept a settlement to the Sino-Vietnamese dispute before beginning to search for oil.

## US consumer prices up 0.4%

US inflation, as measured by the Labour Department's consumer price index, was 0.4 per cent in March, pushed up by higher prices for food, energy and apparel. The core rate, which eliminates the volatile food and energy sectors, rose by 0.3 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms.

The index held some good news for inflation hawks. Prices for medical goods rose a modest 0.5 per cent, and services prices, at 0.2 per cent, were half the rise of the previous month. Ecolife, the report issued by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell-C.J. Lawrence, said the current energy price rises are temporary and that "inflation pressures remain subdued".

A separate government report provided more encouragement on inflation. According to the Commerce Department, retail sales rose only 0.1 per cent in March, after a big 1.9 per cent rise in February. Durable goods sales were up 8.1 per cent for the year ending March, with car sales up 10.9 per cent.

## Attack on Colombo harbour

Tamil Tiger guerrillas yesterday staged a suicide attack against the Colombo harbour, damaging two ships. Two divers, strapped with explosives, entered the harbour and apparently targeted a liquid gas tanker.

A Singapore car carrier, the MV Singa Ace, also suffered a mortar attack and eight cars on the top deck were damaged by the blast. The vessel was coming from Singapore and on its way to Oman after discharging a small load of cars in Colombo.

A crew member of the Singa Ace said a rebel boat fired rocket propelled grenades before the vessel was blown out of the water by a naval gunboat. An estimated 10 rebels died in the failed attack.

Shipping sources said that freight costs were likely to rise with insurance firms demanding higher premium for ships calling at Colombo after the attack.

The government, which is hoping to turn Colombo into a regional shipping hub, assured international shipping lines that security would be tightened at the port.

## Looting continues in Monrovia

Looting continued yesterday in Monrovia, where US military forces are still evacuating foreign residents from the war-stricken Liberian capital.

Fighting broke out last week between rival factions of the fragile coalition government formed last year by Liberia's several war lords, who had signed a peace agreement in the Nigerian capital Abuja to try to end five years of civil war. The agreement collapsed when rival members of the coalition tried to arrest by force a former member, Mr Roosevelt Johnson, leader of the United Front.

There was no intervention in Monrovia by the large West African peace-keeping force yesterday as a United Nations property in Monrovia was among the targets raided by armed rebels. The soldiers say they have been unable to restore order in the capital.

## Kim set to gain from poll outcome

By John Burton in Seoul

It may not have been a ringing endorsement, but South Korean President Kim Young-sam has much to cheer about after Thursday's general election.

Results released yesterday have given Mr Kim several important political advantages allowing him to pursue economic and political reforms, while adopting a more conciliatory policy towards North Korea.

Although the ruling New Korea party narrowly lost its parliamentary majority, securing 139 of the 299 seats in the National Assembly, observers expect the centre-right government will easily recruit most of the 16 independent assembly members to maintain control before the new session opens late next month.

In contrast, the opposition is deeply divided between the centre-left National Congress for New Politics and the conservative United Liberal Democrats. Devastating losses for the minor moderate Democratic party might persuade it to join the government.

Equally important, the election has allowed Mr Kim to consolidate his control over the ruling party, which had been split between his minority moderate faction and a majority conservative supporters affiliated with the former military government.

Candidates supporting Mr Kim's faction were elected to almost two-thirds of the ruling party's seats. The combination of both internal and external political opposition has put a brake on Mr Kim's plans to deregulate the state-dominated economy as Korea prepares to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development later this year.

The results will make it easier for Mr Kim to accelerate reforms demanded by the OECD member states. The election came as Korean officials discussed efforts with the OECD to promote capital liberalisation, regarded as the single biggest obstacle to Seoul's entry into the club of industrialised nations.

Fears of a conservative backlash had prompted Mr Kim to adopt a hard-line policy toward North Korea ahead of the general election.

North Korea's recent decision to abandon the 1953 armistice agreement that ended the Korean war is seen by some analysts as a protest by Pyongyang against the lack of progress in its relations with the US as well as South Korea.

Mr Kim may now be in a stronger position to compromise on the North Korean issue when he meets US President Bill Clinton on the South Korean resort island of Cheju next week. The South Korean government had disagreed with attempts by Washington to improve ties gradually with Pyongyang.

The election also indicates that the ruling party is in a stronger position to win next year's presidential campaign. The New Korea party received the highest amount of votes, at 39 per cent, and performed well in most areas of the country. Support for the opposition parties was mainly confined to their traditional regional bastions.

Having gained firm control of the ruling party, Mr Kim, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second term, is now in a better position to hand-pick his successor.

One name being mentioned is Mr Lee Hoi-chang, a former prime minister, who managed the ruling party's parliamentary campaign.

President Kim must also feel personal satisfaction that the election appears to have ended the presidential hopes of his long-time political rival, Mr Kim Dae-jung, the main opposition leader, who failed to secure a parliamentary seat. The two have feuded bitterly for decades.

## HK warned against political activism

By John Ridding in Hong Kong

China yesterday warned against political activism in Hong Kong, claiming it would damage the territory's prospects as an international trade and financial centre.

"Hong Kong people will not be willing to see Hong Kong become a centre for political struggles," said Mr Zhou Nan, head of the territory's branch of Xinhua news agency, China's de facto embassy.

He said Hong Kong should remain a centre for business rather than politics, and expressed optimism for the territory's economic development after it is "unshackled from colonial rule".

The comments came amid serious strain between Britain and Beijing over Hong Kong's handover to China next year, and as Beijing's top official on Hong Kong is visiting the territory for consultations about political institutions concerning the transition.

Britain and local democratic politicians have condemned Beijing's plans to replace the legislature which was elected last year. Britain and China had failed to agree on electoral rules for a Legislative Council which would span Hong Kong's handover.

The dispute over the legislature has raised fears of a difficult transition. However, senior industrialists and business leaders attending a conference yesterday expressed confidence about the handover and the territory's ability to develop as a trade and financial centre.

Addressing the conference, Mr Lu Ping, head of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs office and China's senior official on Hong Kong, sought to allay worries about nationality and travel issues. He said Beijing would take a flexible stance and leave it up to returning residents whether to declare foreign or Chinese nationality.

The issue is of concern to many overseas Chinese who may want to return to Hong



Countdown: Lu Ping checks his watch in Hong Kong

Kong to live and work but who have acquired foreign nationality. It is also seen as important in maintaining the territory's role as a business centre.

The speech was welcomed by the pro-business Liberal party, although diplomats noted that it left unresolved uncertainties relating to right of abode in Hong Kong and qualification for Chinese nationality.

Mr Lu is in Hong Kong for consultations about the formation of a 400-member selection committee. The body will set up the provisional legislature and nominate the future chief

executive, the post-colonial governor.

Both Mr Lu and Mr Zhou expressed commitment to the "one country, two systems" formula which underpins the handover intended to ensure autonomy for Hong Kong.

Mr Lu said that the consultations with grassroots organisations and individuals during the next few days demonstrated China's responsiveness to local views.

However, members of the Democratic Party, the largest element in the legislature, had their invitations to the consultations withdrawn.

## Bargains galore in the foreign home department

By John Ridding in Hong Kong

Weekend shopping in Hong Kong means a lot more than throngs. Among the throngs which will pass through the territory's glitzy shopping malls and hotels today, some have a foreign house on their list.

"Sometimes it takes them a few days to decide, but they can also buy on the spot," says Mr Louis Li, director of Rubicon Properties. His company has information on display about 65 units in the English university town of Cambridge. In another presentation nearby, customers can browse condominiums in Canada.

The success of off-the-peg property sales - in which many dwellings are snapped up during the weekend exhibitions - reflects Hong Kong's twin obsessions with shopping and property and the disposable wealth of many of its inhabitants. And in land-scarce Hong Kong, even up-market developments in London's smart Kensington area or in downtown Vancouver are a relative steal.

The condos on offer in Vancouver cost about HK\$1,700 (US\$219.80) per square foot. By contrast, Mr David Faulkner, partner at Brooke Hillier Parker, estimates that a flat in one of Hong Kong's smarter residential areas would cost HK\$6,000 per square foot. The \$500,000 being asked for a penthouse in London's expensive Chelsea area would not get you very far up an apartment block on Hong Kong island.

In some cases, the attractions of an overseas home lie in political considerations and Hong Kong's looming handover to China next year.

"We have clients who want to shift assets overseas as a precaution," says one property agent. "And for some it provides the option of somewhere to live if

things don't work out here."

This motive, however, has been losing much of its force. "Most of those looking for a bolt-hole have already got one by now," says Mr Faulkner. "The real boom years were at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s when emigration was the driving force and you could sell a block of flats over the weekend and go home."

But there is little cause for concern with the current state

## In some cases, the attractions of an overseas home lie in political considerations and Hong Kong's looming handover to China next year

of the market. "Demand continues to be strong," says Mr Peter Murray, director of Colliers Jardine. The steady accumulation of red "sold" stickers on the board of available apartments in a hotel showroom at one recent exhibition showed the level of interest.

Hong Kong remains the biggest market for overseas UK property sales, although Singapore runs it close in certain areas, such as central London.

But the tastes of Hong Kong clients have become more diverse. "The big markets, such as Australia, the UK and Canada are still popular," says one real estate agent. "But now you are seeing demand for property in places like India and the Philippines."

For those drawn by the motherland, there is even the option of what the advertisements describe as the Beijing Riviera.

# Founding Fathers beat another firebrand generation

Washington ways and a prospective election have tamed the freshmen of the Republican revolution, writes Patti Waldmeir

Revolution? We don't use that word anymore." For Congressman Joe Scarborough of Florida and the other *enfant terribles* of the 1994 Republican revolution, the change of rhetoric is all part of growing up in the ways of Washington.

On Monday, he and the other 72 "freshmen" Republican Congressmen elected 18 months ago will return to the capital from their Easter recess. They will look neither so young nor so terrible as when they stormed Capitol Hill.

The realities of Capitol politics had already done much to tame the freshmen, and now the desire for re-election is completing that process. Talk drive to the goal: they guaranteed a big touchdown pass.

frighens them. So most freshmen have stopped pushing it.

Some still use the word, but when they do, they use a qualifying adjective, like "slow" or "measured". Or they drop the first letter altogether and speak sagely of "evolution". Mr J.C. Watts, freshman Congressman from Oklahoma and former professional footballer, draws analogies from the American game. "You can throw a 90-yard pass, and get a touchdown in 7 or 8 seconds, or you can get three yards here and five yards there, and eventually score after 16 or 17 plays. But you get the same six points for both of 'em." Unfortunately for their re-election prospects, the freshmen did not promise voters a steady drive to the goal: they guaranteed a big touchdown pass.

Congressman Scarborough, the freshman class political director, reflects on the obstacles they met on the way. "It took us several months to come to grips with the fact that the House [of Representatives] and the Senate are really very different creatures," he explains. The Senate was designed by the Founding Fathers to cool the ardor of an impetuous House, and it did.

Unlike the House, the Senate never had a Contract with America (the legislative manifesto for change which became the bible of House freshmen).

Sitting senators prevented the freshmen from fulfilling some Contract promises (like the cherished balanced budget amendment); other Contract measures, though passed by

Congress, were vetoed by President Clinton (welfare reform, and tax cuts). The freshmen were left with a paltry legislative record on which to campaign for re-election.

That will affect more than a few fresh-faced and fierce young politicians. The outcome of the 1996 election as a whole will turn to a great degree on the fate of the freshmen Democrats are targeting the 47 first-term Republicans elected with 55 per cent or less of the vote; if more than half of those fail to be re-elected, it could spell the end of Republican dominance of the House.

Congressman Charlie Bass - a freshman with a fine political pedigree (his father served in Congress, his grandfather was governor of New Hampshire, and his great-grandfather

helped run Abraham Lincoln's election campaign) - plans to counter the charge that he and his classmates have failed to deliver the revolution.

"The Contract promised that Congress would take up all the big issues of the late 20th century, it did not say we would do all of it," he says, arguing that it was the presidential veto which stopped the revolt. Congressman Bass believes voters will punish Mr Clinton and not the freshmen.

Political scientist Mr Norman Ornstein doubts this. "The bulk of the freshmen had this tremendous hubris coming in. They believed they could bring Clinton to his knees. They believed... that the voters so ardently wanted a balanced budget and small government that they would

applaud them for going to the wall over it." That did not happen. When their confrontation with the White House over the balanced budget led to a government shutdown late last year, the freshmen were blamed for it. Their standing has never recovered.

Most have been, in the words of Congressman Scarborough, "educated in the ways of Washington". For him, that means appreciating the checks and balances created by the Founding Fathers.

"I no longer bang my head against the wall every morning and say, 'Why isn't everyone

for a balanced budget in seven years?" he says. "And I have greater respect for the system," he adds. "We are part of a process which works, and which doesn't allow any one body to bring about a revolution on its own. The system demands that, if there is going to be a revolution, it has to start as an evolution and take more than two years to complete. And it requires a Senate and a President who go along."

But for the moment, it requires most of all the re-election of the freshmen. And there is nothing like an election to tame a revolution.

## Carmakers to work for transatlantic standards

By Haig Simonian, Motor Industry Correspondent

Officials from US and European motor industries have agreed to try to harmonise standards and certification to boost car trade across the Atlantic.

After two days of talks in Washington, car industry executives set a timetable to start harmonising rules on environmental matters, such as noise and exhaust emissions, by November 1996.

This would be followed by recommendations for mutual recognition of items, such as safety belts and seating systems by November 1997 and a commitment to examine

rules on anti-theft systems, crash protection and bumpers.

The participants said: "Automobile manufacturers on both sides of the Atlantic have taken seriously the task of creating a road map for harmonisation and will work diligently with their respective governments to provide necessary support for achieving harmonisation."

A number of leading car-makers have blamed the lack of common standards for adding to the cost of motor vehicles and impeding rationalisation in the motor industry.

Mr Alex Trotman, the chairman of Ford, recently said that "unique local requirements add cost, time and complexity

to operating around the world... they're certainly a major roadblock to free trade in a business environment that demands global competition."

Mr Martin Bangemann, the European Union's industry commissioner, said common standards could reduce the cost of a car by up to 10 per cent. As a first step, he suggested national recognition of another country's standards, provided they were of "functional equivalence", with subsequent moves to produce a common set of standards.

"These are issues that we think are extraordinarily important," Ms Mary Good, the acting US commerce secretary, said after the meeting.

## US sees victory in Japan car market

By Nancy Dunne in Washington

The US administration yesterday declared a victory for its aggressive drive to open Japan's car and car parts market and its "results-oriented" trade policy.

The White House has produced an upbeat status report on the controversial automotive trade arrangements signed with Japan last June. President Bill Clinton, accompanied by industry officials, was yesterday due to release the report, amid much fanfare to attract the attention of big industrial states vital to Mr Clinton's re-election campaign.

The report shows a drop in

US car imports from 17.7m in 1992 to 14.4m last year. In the same period workers employed in US vehicle and vehicle parts manufacturing rose from 813,000 to 933,000. Many analysts believe the shift was inevitable because of the strong yen and the practice of moving production to big markets.

Exports from Chrysler, GM and Ford to Japan rose 215 per cent between 1992 and 1995, although they started from a tiny base. Exports of US parts to Japan jumped 80 per cent.

The report notes that many US parts companies that were previously unsuccessful in Japan are reporting "significant new contracts and sales opportunities."

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Verona meeting hopes to kickstart new ERM

NEWS: UK

# French company wins rail franchise

By Robert Rice in London

A French company is to receive a UK government subsidy of £300m (£547.20m) over the next seven years to run the busy rail commuter network serving south London and the south coast.

CGEA Group, a transport subsidiary of Générale Des Eaux, the French utility, which yesterday was awarded a seven-year franchise to run Network SouthCentral, is the first continental European company to become involved in running Britain's railways.

Although only the fifth of the 26 passenger rail franchises to be sold, the sale was seized on by Sir George Young, the UK transport secretary, as proof that privatisation had not been derailed by the announcement two days ago by Mr Roger Salmon, the franchising director, that he was stepping down two years early in October.

"Franchising now has a real momentum behind it, and the market is rising admirably to

the opportunities this presents," Sir George said.

The suburban and mainline routes to and from the south of London will be run by London & South Coast, a wholly owned subsidiary of CGEA Group.

The company plans to introduce off-peak and Sunday services for south London and upgraded, faster services between London and Brighton. In addition it will invest £10m over the next three years in improving stations and trains.

However, the company has made no commitment to renew Network SouthCentral's 30-year-old rolling stock, confirming the tendency to award long franchises of 12 or 15 years only in return for commitments to renew trains.

Mr Salmon said yesterday: "The rolling stock is fit for the life of this franchise and replacing it would not be economic. The Health and Safety Executive is content with this."

The company also expects to "franchise" now has a real momentum behind it, and the market is rising admirably to



George Muir (left) and Antoine Hurel of the French-owned rail company announce their winning bid

receive a subsidy of £85.3m in the first year declining to £34.6m in 2002-03. The average annual subsidy over the life of the franchise will be £51.4m. Network SouthCentral, which benefits from access to three London mainline stations, had passenger revenues of £137.3m in 1994-95.

About 61 per cent of the net-

work's passenger revenue will be subject to fares regulation. Nationally, key fares will be capped at an average of the inflation rate for three years from January this year and 1 per cent below the retail prices index for the following four years.

Rival bidders for the franchise were a joint bid from

Stagecoach, the Perth-based bus company, and a management buy-out team, and National Express, the bus company. Générale Des Eaux was also part of the unsuccessful management buy-out bid for the east coast, maintaining franchise which was awarded to Sea Containers, the shipping company, at the end of March.

# Clinton greets Labour leader

Financial Times Reporters

The opposition Labour party leader, Mr Tony Blair, basking in his party's resounding by-election victory, yesterday received a warm welcome from President Bill Clinton in Washington as prominent Tories rekindled doubts about Mr John Major's ability to deliver a general election win.

The prime minister acknowledged that the declaration of Conservative support on Thursday night in the Midlands constituency of Staffordshire South East was "disappointing". But he added: "Politics is not an easy ride. I am here to do what is right and stick with it."

The result, which saw Labour pick up 60 per cent of the vote in a previously staunch Tory seat, left the government clinging to a majority of one.

Labour will seek to compound government's difficulties with a debate on rail privatisation next week, while the Scottish Nationalists called for a co-ordinated strategy to force an early general election.

Senior Conservative MPs said the defeat, which exceeded the worst expectations of strategists, called for a fresh approach to policy presentation.

Mr John Redwood, who challenged Mr Major unsuccessfully for the Conservative party leadership last year, said: "I think there is a clear message here for the government about the mood of the nation."

He added: "Voters in the by-election were saying the economic recovery is not enough, they want to see more action on tax, they want reassurance about the health service, they want reassurance about the future direction of the country."

Mr Michael Howard, the home secretary and a senior cabinet rightwinger, said the result showed "we are not getting our message across".

Mr Blair said the Conservatives had been "deeply humiliated". For many Tories, the timing of his talks at the White House could not have been more galling. However, they took heart from a clear attempt by Mr Clinton not to appear too close to the Labour leader.

Administration officials said the president now had a good working relationship with Mr Major which he would not jeopardise.

Mr Clinton parried questions about Mr Blair's electoral prospects, although they did have a short discussion about the by-election result.

The 40-minute meeting dealt with Northern Ireland, foreign affairs and what was described as the "common economic problems faced by centre parties". Mr Clinton praised Mr Blair for his "statesmanlike" approach to the Ulster peace process.

Mr Blair said the main focus of the talks had been the common interest Labour and the US Democrats had in finding solutions to problems of social and economic insecurity.

Discussions between his office and the president's on mutual policy development would continue, Mr Blair added, but no formal process had been set in train.

# Railtrack sell-off offers investors share discounts

By Krishna Guha in London

Private investors will be offered a discount worth up to £120 or a bonus of one free share for every 15 purchased when Railtrack - the owner of track, signalling and stations - is privatised, the government has announced.

Private client stockbrokers said the offer was "quite good" and favoured long-term investment in Railtrack shares. The discount could not be assigned a percentage value because the share price has not been announced.

Investors who "stagnate" Railtrack shares - selling part-paid shares soon after the flotation - will be eligible for either offer, according to SBC Warburg, the UK merchant bank which is advising on the sale.

The bank said that private investors who hold their

shares until the second instalment is paid - in the next financial year - will be able to choose a discount of 15p per share or as many as 800 shares allocated. Alternatively, private investors can opt for the bonus offer of one free share for every 15 shares held. This offer is available for as many as 1,500 shares allocated and held until May 31 1999.

These offers apply to private investors who register with a "share shop" - a bank, building society, broker or other financial intermediary authorised by the government to conduct the offer.

Private investors will also benefit from a discount on the first instalment, which will be set below the international offer price paid by institutions.

Mr Matthew Orr, of stockbrokers Killik & Co, said: "Every-

thing depends on the price - 15p off £1 is a 15 per cent discount, but 15p off £10 would only be 1.5 per cent off." He added that the bonus offer of one for 15 was less generous than offers in early privatisations.

Brokers said that the relative merits of the two offers could not be assessed until the price was known. The higher the price, the more attractive the bonus offer against the 15p discount.

However, Mr Stephen Lansdown, a private client stockbroker, said the discount compared favourably with recent power sector privatisations. He said that the market expected a discount of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent for private investors.

A better route, Page 9

# Train drivers 'offered 20% rise'

By Robert Taylor, Employment Editor

Train drivers employed by the Great Western rail company can expect pay rises of more than 20 per cent - or £90 a week - in an efficiency deal being negotiated by Aslef, their union, and the management-owned company.

Mr Lew Adams, Aslef's general secretary, said that agreement was imminent and the union would be recommending acceptance of the offer. "This will set the pace for drivers' pay in the privatised railway industry. It provides a benchmark for drivers in other operating companies," he added.

Under the proposals, drivers' basic pay would rise from £11,564 (£17,577) to £20,000 a year. The union has agreed to accept the abolition of overtime working and the absorp-

tion into earnings of benefits that used to add 40 per cent to the basic rate.

Aslef would also agree that up to 50 of the 375 Great Western drivers' jobs would be shed, but union officials stressed that this would be through voluntary redundancies. It is also expected that managers would have to accept redundancy as drivers took on more responsibilities as part of the deal, which is designed to make efficiency savings.

Mr Adams said yesterday, however, that the union would continue to oppose the privatisation of the railway industry. Aslef is expected to introduce a resolution at the autumn conference for the opposition Labour party, calling for a future Labour government to return the whole of the railways to state ownership.

# Safety net for beef farmers criticised

Financial Times Reporters

The meat trade sharply criticised the government's application of the beef intervention system yesterday after only 140 tonnes of British beef was bought by the European Commission compared with 8,000 tonnes for the rest of the European Union.

"The government has set up intervention in the most restrictive way possible in the UK," said Mr Peter Scott, the general secretary of the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers. "We've been warning for three years that the system is inflexible, impractical and unworkable."

When intervention was triggered by last week's emergency meeting of EU farm ministers in Luxembourg, the UK was expected to account for the bulk of tenders. However, Germany, with about 4,500 tonnes, and France, with 3,000 tonnes, accounted for most of the beef bought.

Meat traders believe the government has organised intervention, which is designed to provide a safety net for farmers, in a restricted way because of its free market principles.

The British intervention board yesterday widened the categories of meat it would accept into intervention.

The board said the main reason for the low take-up of British beef into intervention yesterday was that farmers had their eye on "the main chance". Demand was picking up on the open market where they would get more for it than in intervention.

European Commission officials were surprised by the low UK figure, but suggested it reflected hopes that market conditions might improve, and uncertainty surrounding the slaughter plan to control bovine spongiform encephalopathy to be presented by the UK before the end of April.

The beef is being bought to be put into cold storage until it can be sold - the first time the intervention procedure, which produced the infamous "beef mountains" of the early 1980s, has been used for more than two years. Brussels is prepared to buy up to 50,000 tonnes of beef over a one-month period.

The government lifted its ban on imports of beef from cattle aged over 30 months after protests from Australia, New Zealand and Argentina.

# Fresh boost for lossmaking Names

By Ralph Atkins, Insurance Correspondent

Lloyd's of London yesterday raised hopes that lossmaking Names could get substantial extra help following revisions to its ambitious recovery plan. It is also hopeful of agreeing a £100m (£162.00m) contribution from auditors involved in litigation at the insurance market.

Lloyd's optimism follows revised figures on the cost of setting up Equitas, a giant

reinsurance company which Lloyd's plans to take over bills of pounds of liabilities on insurance policies sold before 1993.

Equitas bills are now expected to be "markedly" lower for many Names, individuals whose assets have traditionally supported Lloyd's. Those benefiting, Lloyd's indicated, would be largely "honourable" members - those Names which have met their obligations at Lloyd's over the years.

Lloyd's is also hopeful that a £100m contribution to the recovery plan from auditors

facing legal action for damages from lossmaking Names will be agreed in the next week or two. Although the figure is lower than demanded by Names, there are signs that a deal will be struck.

The auditors' contribution will help push from £2.8m to more than £3m the out-of-court settlement offer to loss-making and litigating Names which, along with Equitas, comprise Lloyd's recovery plan. As well as ending litigation which is crippling debt collection at Lloyd's, the out-of-court offer is intended to

soften Equitas bills. Meanwhile, Lloyd's sought to play down the impact of a court ruling in California, which dismissed an attempt to block moves against the insurance market by the state's securities regulators.

The California Department of Corporations alleges investment in Lloyd's was mis-sold and wants to seize \$500m held in trust to support Lloyd's US underwriting. Lloyd's said the ruling referred to an earlier action by the department and that it would now seek to have a revised motion, filed this week, dismissed.

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# Irish republican held in Dublin

Financial Times Reporters

An Irish republican was being questioned by police in Dublin last night following a joint operation between British and Irish security forces in the wake of the South Quay bomb in London's Docklands.

The detention of the 26-year-old man, who was arrested on

Thursday, came after a co-ordinated hunt by Irish and UK police following the resumption of the IRA's bombing campaign on the UK mainland in February.

The UK anti-terrorist squad was reluctant to confirm that the arrest could be connected with the bomb attack in the Docklands district, which

killed two people and marked the end of the IRA's 17-month ceasefire.

The British government is due soon to publish legislation establishing elections on May 30 to a Northern Ireland forum.

US President Bill Clinton, who has been strongly involved in the Northern

Ireland peace process, last night sought to apply pressure on nationalists and republicans to co-operate with the next, and potentially decisive, phase.

Mr Clinton said that the US administration had consistently pressed for talks involving "all parties committed to a peaceful democratic future" for the province.

# BP sell-off may signal shift in industry structure as assets enter their final productive phase

# Retirement looms for North Sea oil fields

By Robert Corzine in London

The current sale by British Petroleum of four oil fields off the Scottish coast could herald a new era for the North Sea oil industry.

In recent years government officials and oil executives have speculated about possible structural changes in the North Sea industry as many of the earlier fields approach their final productive phase.

Big operators which pioneered the development of the industry in the 1970s are expected to progressively withdraw from older fields in order to concentrate resources outside the UK or in new producing areas, such as that just opening up in the deep waters west of the Shetland Islands.

Some observers have predicted the emergence of new oil companies or consortiums of oil companies and service companies which would specialise in running fields in their final years. They would also have to oversee their abandonment.

BP's proposed sale of the Beatrice, Buchan, Clyde and Thistle fields and the oil terminal at Nigg could offer evidence that such changes are finally taking place. But the

sale also raises difficult issues both for the government and industry alike.

BP executives stress that the company is not a "forced seller" of the fields, which in 1994 were grouped together under the management of a "mature asset team" (Matst), whose brief was to extend the life of the rapidly declining reservoirs. "Two years ago these fields had little value," according to BP. "But the improvement in performance has been so marked that a number of companies have recently expressed interest in these fields."

Although BP says the fields "still offer significant upside potential", they are finding it difficult to compete within the company for capital, say executives.

Finding a buyer for such assets is not merely a matter of agreeing a price, however. BP says the government must be convinced that any new operator would have the technical competence to run the fields safely, and could undertake the expensive process of decommissioning the platforms once oil production ends.

Some executives point to the US Gulf of Mexico as a model for what might occur in the

Field	Original reserves	Production to date	Now extractable with investment	Potential recoverable with investment
Beatrice	136	145	150	164
Buchan	45	102	120	130
Clyde	122	109	132	139
Thistle area	380	412	426	470

UK. Dozens of small oil companies have been established in recent years in Texas and Louisiana that specialise in operating older oil fields. The lower overheads of such "Ma and Pa" operations allow them to make a profit on fields which would be uneconomic for larger companies.

But there is less scope for overhead reduction in the UK, say industry experts, because of the much harsher conditions of the North Sea and worries

over safety issues and eventual abandonment. That means that very small companies are unlikely to emerge as specialist operators in the UK.

Instead, "reputable second-tier oil companies" such as exploration and production groups with operating experience outside the UK, or consortiums which group such companies with oil service companies, are the most likely candidates to get government approval, say executives.

UK NEWS DIGEST

# Regulations for banks tightened



The Bank of England yesterday extended the powers of accountants appointed to help it regulate banks. The Bank's action follows recommendations made by the Board of Banking Supervision into the collapse of Barings in February 1995. Barings failed after Mr Nick Leeson, a trader based in Singapore, ran up \$1.4m losses through unauthorised derivatives trades. At present banks must commission reporting accountants, often their auditors, to report to the Bank of England periodically on systems and controls, and on the accuracy of statistical returns. Proposed changes to this system were broadly outlined in January this year.

Yesterday the bank published details of these changes which will come into effect on April 15. Reporting accountants may in future be asked to report on operations within the banking group - other than the bank itself. These could include operations outside the UK. The Bank may also commission special reports if required - when for example a bank significantly changes its business - in addition to the routine reports which are normally made annually. Banking associations and the leading accountancy firms were consulted over the changes.

# Fujitsu to expand in N Ireland

West Belfast, one of Northern Ireland's most economically blighted areas, received a further jobs boost yesterday with the announcement of a £7.36m (\$11.12m) expansion by Fujitsu, the Japanese electronics company.

The decision to expand, creating an additional 100 jobs at the Springvale plant, follows a trip last month to Japan by Business Development, the Northern Ireland economy minister.

The factory, on an industrial estate on the peace line between the Roman Catholic and Protestant areas, will make telecommunications switching gear for British Telecommunications and other companies.

The latest announcement comes in the wake of local press reports that Emerson Electric of Missouri, the parent company of the Larn-based engineering concern F.G. Wilson, is poised to make a large-scale diesel engine investment in the area, possibly in collaboration with Caterpillar, the US plant manufacturer.

A price war is looming in the video games market as Sony, the Japanese electronics group, is considering following its arch-rival Sega, by slashing the price of its 32-bit games system from £299 (\$454.48) to £249.

At the beginning of this month Sega announced that it was undercutting Sony by reducing the price of the Saturn games system to £249 in a special three-week price promotion.

Sales of the Saturn have since doubled. Sega is now expected to leave the price at £249 and Sony is understood to be considering cutting the price of its PlayStation system, now £299, to a comparable level.

So far the PlayStation has sold 3.2m systems worldwide, against 3.5m for the Saturn. The Sony system, which has achieved global hardware and software sales of \$2bn, has sold 200,000 machines in the UK, thereby outstriking the Saturn.

Sega recently announced that it was rationalising its European sales operation. Both Sega and Sony will face fresh competition next autumn when Nintendo, another Japanese games group, launches its Ultra 64, a 64-bit games system.

Immigration into Britain has been remarkably steady during the past decade and contributes close to one-third of the country's total population growth.

According to the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, total immigration to Britain - defined as people intending to stay for 12 months or more - has fluctuated at around 210,000 people every year for most of the past decade.

The largest proportion of immigrants - more than 25 per cent - come from the European Union, but nearly as many arrive from the new Commonwealth, including the Indian subcontinent, Africa and the Caribbean. The EU is also the most popular destination for emigrants, followed by the old Commonwealth - Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada - and the US.

There is also a very high turnover of immigrants, with at least half of all entrants in 1994 planning to stay for less than four years.

# Saving bonds sales at new peak

Sales of National Savings bonds and certificates - index-linked government securities - reached a new high of £11.7bn (£17.75bn) last year, the government said yesterday. These sales provided a record net contribution of £5.25bn state funding in 1995-96.

Pensioners bonds, premium bonds and children's bonds all reached new sales peaks last year. The National Savings Department - which becomes an autonomous agency in July - now manages £57bn of investments. The results reflect favourable interest rates and increasingly aggressive marketing.

A history of one of the world's largest banks and a book which could transform Japanese management style are the first winners of the Financial Times/Booz-Allen & Hamilton Global Business Book Awards. The winner of the best business book of 1995 was *Die Deutsche Bank 1870-1995* by Lothar Gall, Gerald D. Feldman, Harold James, Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich and Hans E. Buechgen, published by C.H. Beck.

The winner of the best management book was *Intellectualising Capability* by Noboru Kono and Kojiro Nonaka, published by Mison Keizai Shinbunsha Publishing.

Professor Harold James, receiving the award for *Die Deutsche Bank*, said its publication was a testament to the courage of the bank, which commissioned its own history in spite of having to deal with the ugly period of the Nazi dictatorship.

"It is an important part of modern German life to think about the lessons of history, one of which is that the suppression of economic freedoms is connected with the suppression of political freedoms," he said.

*Intellectualising Capability*, which has not been published in English, is a study of the way in which organisations treat and create knowledge. The chair of the global judging panel, Mr Edwin L. Artzt, chairman of the executive committee of the board of directors of Procter & Gamble, said the book had the potential to overhaul Japanese - and ultimately the rest of the world's - management style.

Pump contract: Weir Pumps, a subsidiary of Weir, the Glasgow-based engineering company, has won a £4.4m (\$6.6m) order to supply pumps for the BP's ETAP oil field in the North Sea.

سكيا من الالاهل

سودا عن الاموال

INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Deutsche Telekom denies plans for C&W bid

By Andrew Fisher in Frankfurt and Alan Cove in London

Deutsche Telekom, which will raise up to DM16bn (\$10bn) in November through Germany's biggest ever share issue, aims to build up outside shareholdings in the UK and Asia worth more than DM10bn by 2000.

Mr Joachim Kröske, Deutsche Telekom finance director, said this week the group's plans included possible link-ups with Cable and Wireless - in the UK or other markets - although previous attempts to form alliances with the UK company in foreign ventures had not succeeded.

Mr Kröske said Telekom would shortly announce new ventures in the fast-growing markets of south-east Asia and did not deny reports of a possible tie-up in Thailand with Shinjirwa International, a local operator.

Mr Kröske also said Deutsche Telekom would continue reducing its debt, which fell below DM10bn last year and would drop further to about DM80bn, half its balance sheet total of DM160bn, at the end of 1996 or the start of 1997.

He expected the federal government stake in Deutsche Telekom to fall below 50 per cent by around 2002, as it sold more shares to finance the civil servant pension burden it was taking over from the company.

NEWS DIGEST

Yahoo! shares soar on Wall St debut

Internet frenzy hit Wall Street again yesterday with the stock market debut of Yahoo!, the pioneer directory service for the World Wide Web.

Created in 1994 by Mr David Filo and Mr Jerry Yang, two Stanford University electrical engineering PhD students who began by simply compiling lists of their favourite Web sites, Yahoo! has become one of the most popular means of searching the Internet.

Roche held back by currency Roche, the Swiss drugs company, lifted sales in the first quarter of 1996 by 6 per cent to SF3.79bn (\$3.1bn), from SF3.59bn in the same period last year.

Foster's bid for Rothbury Wines Foster's Brewing, the large Melbourne-based brewer, yesterday made its second takeover foray into Australia's burgeoning wine industry with a 60 cents-a-share offer for Rothbury Wines.

Carlsberg enters Poland Carlsberg, the Danish brewer, yesterday made its first investment in Poland's growing beer market when it was allocated 7m shares worth 127.4m zlotys (\$51m) in a controversial new stock issue by the listed Okocim brewery.

Mazda town greets outsider with quiet resignation

Ford's absorption of its Japanese ally reflects the need for global consolidation, writes Michiyo Nakamoto

For the people of Hiroshima, Mazda's sprawling car plant, which extends along the southern coast of the harbour city, shielding it from the open sea, has been a proud symbol of the region's industrial might.

The decision yesterday by Japan's fifth biggest carmaker to become part of Ford marks a break with Japan's previous aversion to foreign control of flagship industrial companies.

Mr Henry Wallace, the Ford executive who is to become Mazda's new president, alleviated local fears by at least indicating heavy job losses were unlikely.

wider trend among companies, not just in the car industry, but in a wide field, to develop global strategies as borders increasingly fall," noted Mr Masaki Iwasaki, chairman of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association.

Global competition has forced Japanese companies to become less inward looking and more outward looking and more competitive. Even some of Japan's most competitive companies have been put on the defensive.

Nevertheless, the Ford-Mazda link shows Japanese carmakers fully appreciate the need for a stronger global strategy to survive the intensifying rivalry in the motor industry.

ances in particular markets, smaller rivals lacking the resources to do the same independently are being forced to seek alliances for their survival.

Mazda always seemed more likely than most to require a stronger partner to remain viable. It has been losing money heavily for the past two years, with group pre-tax losses of Y47bn (\$428.9m) in fiscal 1994 and Y37bn in the year to March 1995.

The carmaker, which was slow to develop attractive models tailored to the changing needs of the "post-bubble" Japanese market, has seen domestic production nearly halve from a peak of 1.42m in 1990 to 771,000 last year.

Capacity utilisation at Hofu, its state-of-the-art factory in western Japan, is just 45 per cent. "We don't think this is normal," concedes Mr Yoshihiro Wada, the outgoing president sent in from Sunfomoto Bank, Mazda's main bank, four years ago.



Former Mazda president Yoshihiro Wada (left) with successor Henry Wallace from Ford

could also form the basis for a future joint "Asian" distributor controlled jointly with Mazda. According to Mr Booker, Autocams will probably pick up more former Mazda dealers.

Mazda also offers Ford, which wants to expand its Japanese sales, an extensive local dealer network. Ford, like GM and Chrysler, is investing heavily in building up its Japanese sales. Its cars are currently sold in Japan through

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- Along the road to Ford... 1920: Toyo Cork Kogyo founded in Hiroshima, making machine tools. Later renamed Toyo Kogyo 1931: Production of three-wheel trucks begins 1960: Production of first Mazda car, a two-door vehicle called Mazda R360 Coupe

Ford's increased stake is expected to accelerate Mazda's belated restructuring by further reducing its model range and integrating its activities more closely into Ford's global plans.

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COMPANIES AND FINANCE: UK AND IRELAND

# Takeover Panel criticises BET

By Geoff Dyer

The Takeover Panel yesterday criticised BET, the business services group, for issuing a misleading statement about the price of Rentokil's £2.1bn hostile takeover bid for its industry rival.

The panel said a BET statement on Thursday that Rentokil's revised offer was only 1.1 per cent above the previous night's closing price had not used a valid comparison.

BET had compared an offer price which did not include dividends with a BET share price which did include dividend payments, the panel said. The real percentage increase in the value of the statement was 3 per cent.

The panel said it had asked BET not to make any similar comparisons again.

Under the new Rentokil offer, which was increased on Thursday and declared final, BET shares were valued last night at 212p, compared to the closing price of 208½p, up 4p. Rentokil shares were up 1p at 351p.

Analysts speculated yesterday that between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of BET shares, which were very heavily traded on Thursday, are now owned by arbitrageurs. Some analysts believe that these investors would look to sell the shares if the Rentokil offer were rejected, which could cause a sharp fall in the share price.

Rentokil is offering nine new shares and £10 cash for every 20 BET shares, plus a 4p dividend. There is a 202½p cash alternative.

Rentokil announced that by 3pm on Thursday it had received valid acceptances from 3.43 per cent of BET's shareholders for the cash-and-paper offer and 0.12 per cent for the cash alternative. The offer closes on April 26.

# Independent touches parents for £23m

By Raymond Snoddy

A further £23m has been committed to Newspaper Publishing, publishers of the Independent and the Independent on Sunday, most of it to cover losses.

Mirror Group and Independent Newspapers of Ireland have each agreed to provide half of the £23m equity funding through a 1-for-1 rights issue at 31p a share.

Some £14m of the total will effectively replace loans made by the two main shareholders to Newspaper Publishing.

Last year the group incurred pre-tax losses of £19.5m on top of a £50.8m loss for the previous 15 months.

Mr Liam Healy, chairman, said yesterday that Newspaper Publishing "has significantly reduced the rate of losses".

The target is to cut the pre-tax loss this year to £8m-£7m

and the actual figure could be significantly better than that.

The positive factors include cover price increases which took the price from 30p to 40p by January this year without a significant impact on circulation.

In addition, advertising revenues have been rising and costs have been cut, partly through 44 editorial redundancies following a reorganisation.

The Independent averaged

sales of 281,733 copies in the period from August 1995 to January 1996, compared with 287,133 in the same period a year earlier.

Current sales are believed to be about 290,000.

The newspaper has not had a permanent editor since the abrupt departure of Mr Ian Hargreaves last November.

Mr Charles Wilson will remain as acting editor until a permanent appointment is

made. The aim was to get the reorganisation out of the way before the board addressed the editorship issue.

As a result of the rights issue both the Mirror and Independent Newspapers will have 46.42 per cent of Newspaper Publishing.

Prisa, the Spanish publishing group which owns El País, will not be taking up its rights and as a result its holding will be diluted to 6.73 per cent.

# Egypt hits Cunard with £15m reef bill

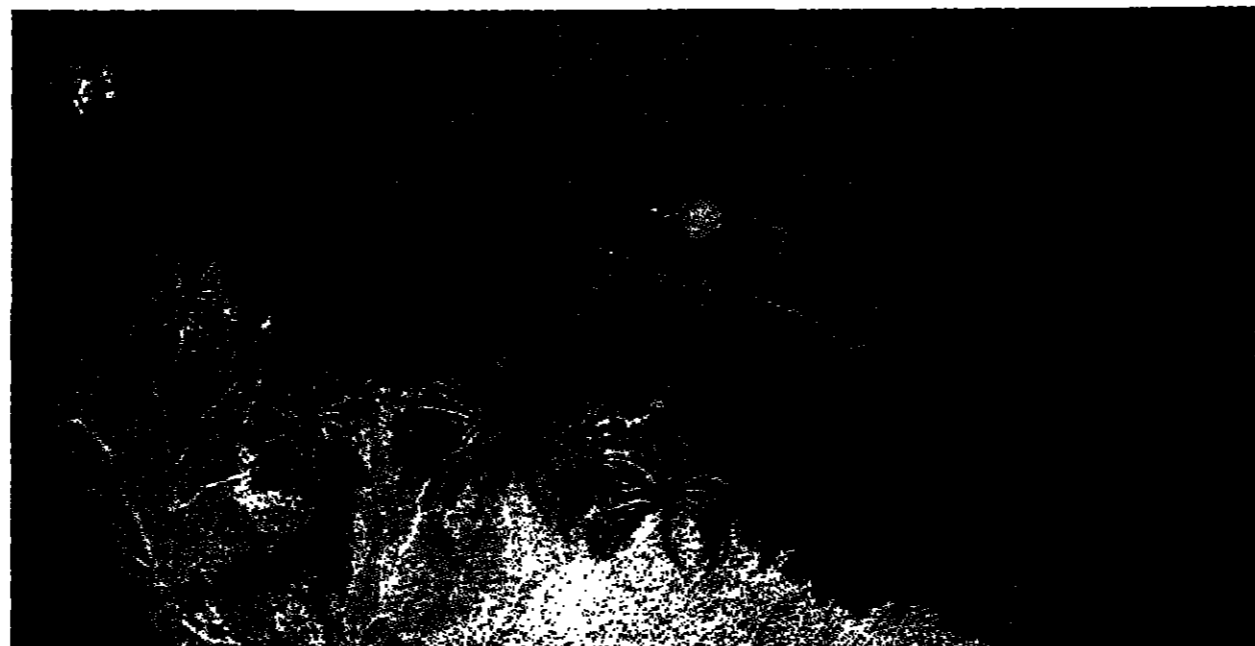
By Simon Kuper

Cunard has confirmed that Egypt is demanding £23.5m (£15.4m) in compensation for damage to a coral reef struck by the loss-making cruise liner's Royal Viking Sun ship last week.

A lawyer representing Cunard and its insurers is meeting officials of Egypt's governmental environment agency today. The company said it was fully insured for all costs except the two months' revenue lost while the luxury liner was out of action.

However, the Egyptian demand raises further doubts over whether Kvaerner will retain Cunard when the Norwegian shipbuilding and engineering group takes over Trafalgar House, the cruise line's parent, later this month.

Mr Trond Andresen, senior vice president at Kvaerner, reiterated yesterday that the group had yet to decide Cunard's future. "It is not on our



Plumbing the depths: Cunard will inspect the Red Sea coral reef for recent damage

list of core assets," he said.

One analyst said: "Cunard's a complete mess. Kvaerner couldn't sell it." However, he suggested that it might change the line's management. "Cunard seems to be a more than average accident-prone company."

Cunard made a £16.4m loss

in 1995 and is unlikely to break even before 1998. The Egyptian incident follows the 1994 fiasco when Cunard's flagship QE2 liner set sail before a \$30m refit had been finished.

The resulting passenger compensation claims cost £8.4m. The company said it was fully insured both for damage

to the reef and for compensation to the 567 passengers for the unused portions of their world cruise tickets.

With tickets costing up to £80,000 each, this bill could run to several million pounds. Cunard's insurer for these liabilities is Steamship Mutual, a group of shipowners that includes Cun-

ard. The hull, damaged in the incident, is insured at Lloyd's.

The cruise line said it would inspect the Red Sea reef "to ascertain whether there has been damage, and if there has been damage, whether it's recent".

The Royal Viking Sun is to resume sailing on June 8.

# Mark Ashurst analyses heavy trade in the conglomerate's shares

## Competitors covet Lonrho's riches

Heavy trade in Lonrho shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange this week has revived speculation over South African interest in the mining assets earmarked for demerger from the conglomerate.

Lonrho shares worth about R718m (£114m), about 7.4 per cent of the shares in issue, changed hands on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on Monday and the price remained strong against a falling market throughout the week.

The activity follows the surprise acquisition last month by Anglo American Corporation of the 53 per cent stake in Lonrho previously held by its founder, Mr Tiny Rowland.

Now Anglo has the option to take its stake to 26 per cent, but has made it clear it is interested only in Lonrho's mining assets, which include a 37 per cent stake in Ashanti Goldfields of Ghana and other mines in Africa and New Guinea, and a majority stake in Duker Exploration, the South African coal producer.

"Ashanti would make an excellent vehicle for Anglo's gold interests in Africa, complementing the offshore activities of Miniro in Europe and Asia," said Mr David Hall, head of research at ING Banking.

Ashanti is expanding its operations in Ghana and Zimbabwe and is expected to produce more than 2m ounces of gold by 2000. "There is no question that Ashanti has already become a mining finance house," said Mr Barry Sergeant, analyst at BofI NatWest Securities in Johannesburg.

A partnership between Ashanti and Anglo would provide the financial muscle to sink another shaft at Ashanti's Obuasi mine in Ghana and enable closer technical co-operation between the two groups.

"It's amazing how many ex-Anglo people are working there already," said one mining engineer at Anglo.

But Anglo's ambitions could frustrate those of rival South African mining finance house Gencor, which plans to merge its Impala Platinum subsidiary with Lonrho's platinum interests. The merger has been stalled pending the outcome of a review by the European Commission, and could be scuppered if Anglo increases its stake in Lonrho.

"Gencor would be well advised to get themselves into a bargaining position. If they can be a party to the first demerger of Lonrho, then there is still scope for the Impala-Lonrho platinum merger," said Mr Sergeant.



Brian Gilbertson: "We don't have a problem raising cash"

In theory, Gencor, which has a 27 per cent stake in Lonrho's platinum division, has first refusal on Lonrho's platinum assets if the parent group changes hands. But Lonrho has borrowings in excess of £262m, of which £111m was in the mining division at the end of September 1995. Analysts said that while the exact distribution of this debt was not known, "the vast majority" was in the platinum division.

If the Lonrho demerger goes ahead, its debt would be allocated to separate divisions. The strategic benefits of Gen-

cor's right of refusal on the platinum assets could be undermined by Lonrho's debt allocation, unless Gencor was in a position to contest the debt at the demerger.

Analysts also noted that the Lonrho trade had occurred in Johannesburg, not London. "Anglo would not have done that quantity of trading on the JSE, but Gencor is still under very severe foreign exchange restrictions," said one.

Gencor is heavily geared, but could raise cash from selling its 16 per cent stake in Malbak, the industrial holding group. However, Mr Brian Gilbertson, Gencor chairman, denied the group would sell its Malbak stake to buy Lonrho. "We don't have a problem raising cash," he said.

He refused to comment on speculation that it had been involved in this week's trade. It is unlikely that Amplats, Anglo's platinum operation, would merge with Lonrho Platinum. If Gencor fails to conclude the deal, Lonrho's platinum mines at Rustenburg would probably be sold to a third party. Mr Steve Kearney, a director of Impala, told analysts on Thursday that the European Commission "was interested in Anglo, and if and when their stake does increase, I assume Anglo would have to address their concerns".

# Apax is on shortlist for two Signet chains

By Simon Kuper

Apax, the venture capitalist, is on the shortlist of bidders for Signet's Ernest Jones and H Samuel jewellery chains.

The shortlist, drawn up by the debt-laden Signet group early this week, is believed to consist of no more than three names. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the merchant bank acting for Signet, is believed to have indicated that a successful bid would have to cover both chains.

Apax's bid is thought to exceed £280m, and if it wins, it is expected to buy Goldsmiths, the UK jeweller, take it private and merge it with one or both of the chains, and then refloat it in about two years' time.

Goldsmiths' market value is £22.5m. The new company might dispose of the H Samuel chain, probably to Argos.

One analyst said: "It sounds an incredibly complicated and expensive way of going about it." Goldsmiths shareholders might demand a large premium for their shares, as they would expect a takeover of the chains to produce savings of up to £28m from merging head offices alone.

Mr Jurek Piseckii, Goldsmiths chairman, chief executive and major shareholder, was watching the US Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia and could not be reached for comment.

Goldsmiths has submitted an independent bid for the chains, but company associates said they had heard nothing about the shortlist. The winning bid is expected to be close to £300m. "That's near the price Signet wanted," the analyst said. Another added: "The likely purchaser is probably paying too high a price."

Signet's market value is £92.2m, and Ernest Jones and H Samuel, its UK arms, accounted for only about 40 per cent of the group's £324m sales for the year to January 23 1995. Signet, which announces its annual results on Wednesday, has bank debts of £320m-£350m and obligations to preference shareholders of nearly £500m, including £130m in unpaid dividends.

Zale Corporation, the US jeweller rumoured to have expressed interest in the chains, yesterday said it had made no bid.

# New Ireland advances to £10.4m

By John Murray Brown in Dublin

New Ireland Holdings, the Dublin-based life and general insurer, reported a 42 per cent increase in pre-tax profits for 1995 to £10.4m (£10.1m), helped by a threefold increase from its general insurance business. Strong bond and equity markets increased investment income from £6.7m to £7.5m.

The embedded value of the life business, which measures investments and future discounted income flows, rose 22 per cent to £102.2m. This included £10m arising from the conversion of its redeemable preference shares.

Funds under management increased 23 per cent to £1.6bn. Annual premium new business increased 4.5 per cent in a static market, while pension sales were up 9 per cent.

Annual premium income rose 14 per cent to £78.6m, while single premium new business sales were slightly down at £28.1m.

The financial services division achieved a profit before tax of £333,000, up 74 per cent, and the general insurance business increased to £23.23m (£21.40,000).

The directors recommended a 10 per cent dividend increase to 16.86p (15.31p) via a final of 12.82p.

# Directors' gains

## Senior executives' pay rises 100% at London Forfeiting

By Patrick Harverson

London Forfeiting, the specialist trade finance group, awarded senior directors an average pay increase of 100 per cent last year after restating their bonuses.

The bonuses, which accompanied a recovery in trading performance as profits climbed 69 per cent to £27.1m, were tied to pre-tax profits, trading performance and earnings per share. No bonuses were paid to the chairman or chief executive in 1994, when the company reported profits down 26 per cent, and other directors received only small bonuses.

Mr Jack Wilson, chairman, was paid a bonus of £284,772, more than his basic salary, which took his total pay to £779,356. In 1994, he earned £381,468. The total pay of Mr

Stathis Papoutis, chief executive, more than doubled to £749,583.

Other directors awarded bonuses worth more than their annual salary were Mr Ooi Boon Ann (a 103 per cent increase, aided by an overseas housing allowance of £61,333, to £284,509), Mr Victor Papadopoulos (up 115 per cent to £515,904), Mr Raphael Pretzeville (up 83 per cent to £439,890), Mr Pravin Samant (up 75 per cent to £440,891) and Mr Mark West (up 11 per cent to £512,633).

Mr GKN: Mr Trevor Bonner, managing director of GKN automotive and agricultural products, has made £245,295 from the sale of shares. He exercised options for the purchase of 152,668 shares at a total cost of £228,351, later selling 140,168 shares at an average of £9.80, receiving £1.37m.

Last month, GKN reported a 61 per cent rise in 1995 profits.

Mr Mirror Group deputy managing director Mr Roger Eastoe and his wife Linda realised £587,199 profit on Thursday by exercising options on 516,173 shares in the newspaper publisher.

Options were granted on 64,000 shares at 125p on May 17 1991 and on 462,173 at 115p on April 6 1995. Mr Eastoe sold 506,173 shares at 230p and transferred 10,000 to Mrs Eastoe, who sold them at the same price. Mr Eastoe retains his existing interest in 38,168 shares.

Mr C&J Clark paid Mr John Clothier, its former group managing director, £163,000 in consultancy fees last year, and not Mr Malcolm Cotton, as stated in yesterday's paper.

Investment Trust	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax profit (£m)	EPS (p)	Current dividend (p)	Date of payment	Dividends corresponding dividend	Total for year	Total last year
Abol	15 mths to Dec 31	30.7 (6.56)	1.86 (0.2844)	3.51 (0.11)	1.12	July 2	1.898	1.898
Anglo Irish Finance	Yr to Dec 31	0.022 (0.013)	0.730 (0.0271)	10.0 (0.371)	12.82	June 5	11.46	16.86
Transtar	Yr to Dec 31	6.52 (4.82)	1.611 (1.321)	30.5 (24.1)				

Investment Trust	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax profit (£m)	EPS (p)	Current dividend (p)	Date of payment	Dividends corresponding dividend	Total for year	Total last year
Invesco English	Yr to Apr 5	162.1 (105.2)	1.46 (0.922)	2.96 (1.07)	0.8	July 25	0.4	1

Earnings shown here. Dividends shown net. Figures in brackets are for corresponding period. \*Comparatives for 12 months. †After exceptional charge. ‡On increased capital. †Includes special interim of 0.56p. \*Comparatives restated. ‡USM stock. †AIM stock.

# NEWS DIGEST

## Compass battles over Eurest

Two of the world's leading contract catering groups are locked in battle over a French business controlled by its managers. Sodexo, the French group which owns Gardner Merchant of the UK, and Compass each own about a third of Eurest France. Compass acquired its share when it bought Eurest International from Accor last July for £59m.

But the 55 managers who own the remaining third of Eurest France have 58 per cent of the voting rights. They will meet on Tuesday to discuss offers for their shares from both Sodexo and Compass.

Sodexo published an advertisement in yesterday's Financial Times outlining its offer of FF692m (£76.7m), rising to FF704m depending on future profitability. It has also taken legal action over the original sale by Accor of its stake to Compass.

Compass, which described Sodexo's advertisement as "an astonishing tactic," said yesterday that it was in advanced negotiations with the management of Eurest France and was confident of its legal position.

Mr Roger Matthews, finance director, said that Eurest France was the group's preferred vehicle for expanding in France, which had a large market with significant growth potential. Eurest France sales last year were about £370m. Compass would not reveal how much it is offering. But the £170m proceeds from December's sale of its healthcare division were understood at the time to be sufficient to purchase the two-thirds of Eurest France that it does not own.

## Redland's fresh bid spurned

Ennemix, the aggregates company, has rejected an increased bid of 36p a share from Redland. The building materials group had previously bid 32p.

Ennemix shares rose 3p to 36p yesterday. Redland said the revised offer, which valued its target at £6.7m, was final and would not be raised. Redland said it held 33.1 per cent of the voting rights after converting its 845,000 preference shares yesterday.

Ennemix claims that its net asset value is 50p a share. Mr Gerald Berwick, chairman, said: "Any sort of offer would have to be reasonably close to that and would by definition have four in front." Most big shareholders had indicated they would not sell at 36p, he said. The largest shareholder is Mr Vaughan McLeod, chief executive, who with his family owns about 26 per cent.

## Greenalls to take £6m charge

Greenalls Group, the pub operator that recently entered the FT-SE 100, yesterday said it would take a £5.5m exceptional charge to cover the cost of changing its distribution and warehousing for its pubs and hotels.

It is contracting out the operation to Wincanton Logistics in a move that should save £1.75m a year after an initial cost of £5m. An additional charge for restructuring Boddington's distribution arrangement with TNT will be included in the £23m overall reorganisation cost announced last year after Greenalls bought the pub operator.

The group made £100m pre-tax in the year to September. The move, which involves an unspecified number of job losses, follows a trend within the industry. Mr Peter Greenall, managing director, said: "There is pressure on service and costs, which means that the traditional dry service is more difficult. We are focusing on core businesses where we have the expertise, and developing businesses where we have strengths." He said the move would allow management to focus on supply and support services to its pubs and hotels.

## Abbot held back by tax charge

Pre-tax profits at Abbot, the oil and gas services group created when Abbot Holdings reversed into Unigroup last June, rose from £364,000 in the year to September 30 1994 to £1.5m for the 15 months to December 31 1995 on the back of a strong performance by KCA Drilling, the Aberdeen-based subsidiary acquired with Abbot.

The pre-tax line was distorted by a write-back of £2.13m goodwill on a disposal. Turnover rose from £6.8m to £30.7m. The contribution from KCA was for six and a half months. However, the company recorded losses per share of 3.5p (0.1p) due to an increased tax charge relating to earlier disposals.

Post-balance sheet events include the February takeover of OIS International Inspection, which carries out non-destructive inspection work for the petrochemical and power industries, following a contested bid launched last December.

## Tracker Network losses halved

Tracker Network, which distributes vehicle tracking systems, halved pre-tax losses from £3.8m to £1.61m in 1995 and predicted a profit this year.

Mr Ralph Kanter, chairman of the AIM-listed group, said: "I am confident that with the introduction of Mark II and the increasing network subscription income, we can look forward to profitability in 1996."

Turnover in 1995 jumped from £4.8m to £8.5m. Unit sales totalled 39,420 - an increase of 26 per cent. Sales of units by motor manufacturers continued to increase, as did the percentage of sales to the heavy goods vehicle and construction sectors.

Mr Kanter said the group's financial position remained strong with £948,000 (£1.22m) cash at the bank and £5.25m (£2.97m) of deferred income on the balance sheet at the year end.

## MBO at CGA Direct

A management team has bought out CGA Direct, the insurance broker, from Oriol Group in a package worth £20m, all but £100,000 of which is funded by Morgan Grenfell Development Capital.

MGDC owns 90 per cent of the company, the management team the rest. Mr Andy Macle of MGDC said it had looked at the deal with an eye to flotation or a trade buy within four to five years. He said Mr Nigel Cayzer, chairman of Oriol, had approached the fund about a deal for CGA, which had more than tripled its policyholders in the past two years to about 80,000.

## First Leisure sells snooker clubs

First Leisure, the diversified leisure and hotels group, has exchanged contracts on the sale of its nine snooker and pool clubs to Waterfall Holdings for a sum exceeding £6.5m.

Completion is expected by the end of April. The consideration consists of a mixture of cash and Waterfall shares amounting to a quarter of its enlarged equity. The sale is conditional on Waterfall being admitted to the Alternative Investment Market.

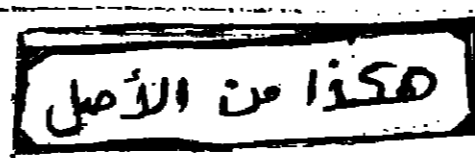
## In Brief

BRITISH THORNTON HOLDINGS is to dispose of its loss-making educational furniture business to a management buy-out team in a £400,000 deal.

INTERCARE GROUP: In an initial move by its new management team, the Huddersfield-based healthcare products supplier is paying £2.1m cash for Sunlight, a maker of electric mobility scooters. Bedfordshire-based Sunlight achieved profits before tax of £301,000 in the 12 months to July 31; net assets at that date amounted to £682,000.

INTRUM JUSTITIA: Broker HSBC James Capel bought 4.51m of its ordinary shares on behalf of Intrum at a price of 100p per share. The shares were bought by Capel as principal and will be transferred to Intrum at 100p each.

REFLECT is seeking to raise £750,000 in an offer for subscription in order to commercialise and market its reflective printing inks. The offer, underwritten by Peel Hunt, values the company at £2.75m. It proposes to join the AIM.



COMMODITIES AND AGRICULTURE

WEEK IN THE MARKETS Cocoa at 10-month high

London Commodity Exchange cocoa futures climbed to the highest level for 10 months yesterday in response to aggressive buying on a wide front.

There are some big buyers out there - specs, funds, all of them, one trader told the Reuters news agency as the July delivery position raced to £1,048 a tonne in morning trading.

At the London Metal Exchange meanwhile copper values were given a boost by a sharp fall in exchange warehouse stocks.

Another big rise in stocks depressed prices of aluminium early yesterday, which was

already the weakest of the LME markets. But the market steadied with copper and \$3 rise on the day left the three months position at \$1,631.50 a tonne, down \$6 on the week.

The precious metals markets had a relatively quiet week with gold platinum and silver all ending modestly higher.

The gold price eased slightly yesterday following mixed US price data, reflecting some disappointment and a pick-up in the bond market, dealers said.

The US Consumer Price Index was up 0.4 per cent compared with an expected 0.3 per cent, while retail sales were up 0.1 per cent against the expected 0.3 per cent.

Analysts remained divided over whether the 19 per cent surge in prices since the end of last month reflected temporary factors or more fundamental pressures.

Richard Mooney

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Gold, Silver, Aluminium, Copper, Lead, Zinc, Tin, Cocoa, Coffee, Sugar, Wheat, Cotton, Wool, Oil.

BASE METALS

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Aluminium, Copper, Lead, Zinc, Tin.

PRECIOUS METALS

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium.

Precious Metals continued

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium.

ENERGY

CRUDE OIL NYMEX

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Crude Oil, Heating Oil, Natural Gas.

GRAINS AND OIL SEEDS

WHEAT LCE

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Wheat, Soybeans, Corn.

SOFTS

COFFEE LCE

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Coffee, Sugar, Cocoa.

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK

LIVE CATTLE CME

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Live Cattle, Hogs, Pigs.

WORLD BOND PRICES

MARKET REPORT

By Conser Middelmann in London and Lisa Branston in New York

European government bond markets followed US bonds higher. Europe's higher-yielding sector put on a particularly good performance, boosted by the strong US currency.

The Dutch central bank took advantage of its currency's strength, cutting rates yesterday to lower its "special advances rate" by 10 basis points to a post-war low of 2.8 per cent.

Table with columns: Country, Bond Type, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes US Treasury, German Bund, Japanese, etc.

BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT BONDS

Table with columns: Country, Bond Type, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes US Treasury, German Bund, Japanese, etc.

US INTEREST RATES

LIBOR

Table with columns: Rate, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes 3-month, 6-month, 12-month LIBOR.

BOND FUTURES AND OPTIONS

FRANCE

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes French Bond Futures and Options.

GERMANY

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes German Bond Futures and Options.

ITALY

Table with columns: Commodity, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes Italian Bond Futures and Options.

UK GILTS PRICES

UK GILTS

Table with columns: Bond Type, Price, Change, High, Low. Includes UK Government Bonds.

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FT-AGRICULTURE FIXED INTEREST INDICES

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FINANCIAL TIMES

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Saturday April 13 1996

# The electricity switchback

Approval for generators to take over regional companies would launch a wave of restructuring in the electricity industry, says David Wighton

## Mr Blair in the radical centre

By-elections in the UK are notoriously fickle guides to the succeeding general election. With the national contest probably still a year away, it would be foolish to predict certain Conservative defeat, still more a landslide Labour victory. Of far greater moment for British politics is the congruence of Thursday's Tory rout, in a fairly prosperous Midlands constituency, with Mr Tony Blair's most forthright renunciation yet of the Labour party's socialist heritage.

The speech could not have been more symbolic. Mr Blair was addressing US businessmen, as part of a US visit which saw him feted by Washington's Democratic elite from President Clinton downwards. Dissaining any mention of the word socialism, the Labour leader dubbed "New Labour" the party of the "radical centre". Its mission was to create a dynamic "one nation" society where "the days of reflex tax and spend politics are over" and every incentive is given to "entrepreneurs, innovators and wealth creators".

Stripped to its policy core, Mr John Major could have repeated the speech almost word for word. The only notable excisions would have been the pledges to a minimum wage, the EU social chapter, and playing "a more positive role in European affairs generally". Yet the last of these mirrors Mr Major's own commitment, on becoming Tory leader, to put Britain "in the front of Europe", while the first two were carefully hedged by statements like: "There is no question of trying to impose a German-style social security system in Britain through the social chapter."

**Strong leadership**  
The crucial point about the speech is its credibility. Tory leaders long ago stopped deriding Mr Blair as a "pale imitation" of Lady Thatcher. Mr Blair daily preaches his determination to take up where she left off, and his popularity lies in a similar combination of strong leadership with an acute perception of the fears and insecurities of Middle England. Even Mr John Prescott, Labour's blunt deputy leader chosen for his trade union roots, yesterday proudly declared himself "middle class".

In politics, perception is all. Mr Major, Mr Kenneth Clarke and most of their cabinet colleagues are also in the "radical centre". But their party appears weak, directionless, and too easily swayed by its extremists. Unless Mr Major can change that perception, he is doomed. Yet as the election draws nearer, and the government's majority falls lower, it

becomes harder for him to do so. It is important to ask, then, what Mr Blair's radical centre would represent in government. A parallel is often drawn with President Clinton, a politician who transformed the image of his "left-wing" party; won office, and may retain it for a second term; but has done precious little "radical" with power.

There are obvious similarities. Like Mr Clinton, Mr Blair will, if elected, work broadly within inherited fiscal disciplines. He will go out of his way to reassure the City and middle-class taxpayers. And his election manifesto will consist largely of Clintonesque platitudes about "security" and "prosperity".

**Control of parliament**  
Also like Mr Clinton, Mr Blair will have a few solid commitments dividing him from his predecessor - notably to constitutional reforms led by Scottish devolution. But unlike Mr Clinton, he will have the means to implement them. British governments control parliament: even if Labour's majority is small or dependent upon minor parties, there will be no Mr Newt Gingrich in contention.

British governments with strong leaders tend to radicalise in office, largely because they wield such untrammelled power. There may be plenty of scope for Mr Blair to follow suit. The question is, on what front would he strike out? Two areas suggest themselves: welfare reform and European policy.

Labour will probably say little concrete about either in its manifesto. But coded shadow cabinet speeches about the need for "innovative approaches" to issues such as benefits-in-to-work and enhanced second pension provision are pointers. Nor can there be much doubt that Mr Blair offers a genuinely more favourable approach to European integration than Mr Major, constrained as the prime minister is not just by recalcitrant backbenchers (which Labour can match) but also by deep Euroscepticism within the cabinet (not so evident in the shadow cabinet).

The most revealing section of Mr Blair's New York speech lay in its comments about Europe. Of the single currency, he said: "We do not see, as the Conservatives do, an over-riding constitutional objection, but there are significant economic difficulties which are not yet resolved." Were the single currency to go ahead, Mr Blair will feel strongly tempted to join at some point. That would have truly radical implications.

The controversy over the future of the UK electricity industry was renewed yesterday with the leak of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into the latest takeover bids in the sector.

The report recommends that National Power's bid for Southern Electric and PowerGen's offer for Midlands Electricity be allowed, creating integrated generation and distribution companies. If the report's recommendations are accepted by Mr Ian Lang, trade and industry secretary, it will reverse the separation of generation from distribution put in place at privatisation.

A minority report by Ms Patricia Hodgson, the BBC's director of policy and planning, says such a move would reduce competition and tend to increase prices - a line that found sympathy among some of the independent electricity distributors. But the large generators argued that competition would be enhanced by the creation of five or six large, vertically integrated groups.

Whatever the effects on competition, the go-ahead for National Power's bid for Southern Electric and PowerGen's offer for Midlands Electricity is expected to trigger a series of further bids in the huge industry restructuring which started at the end of 1994.

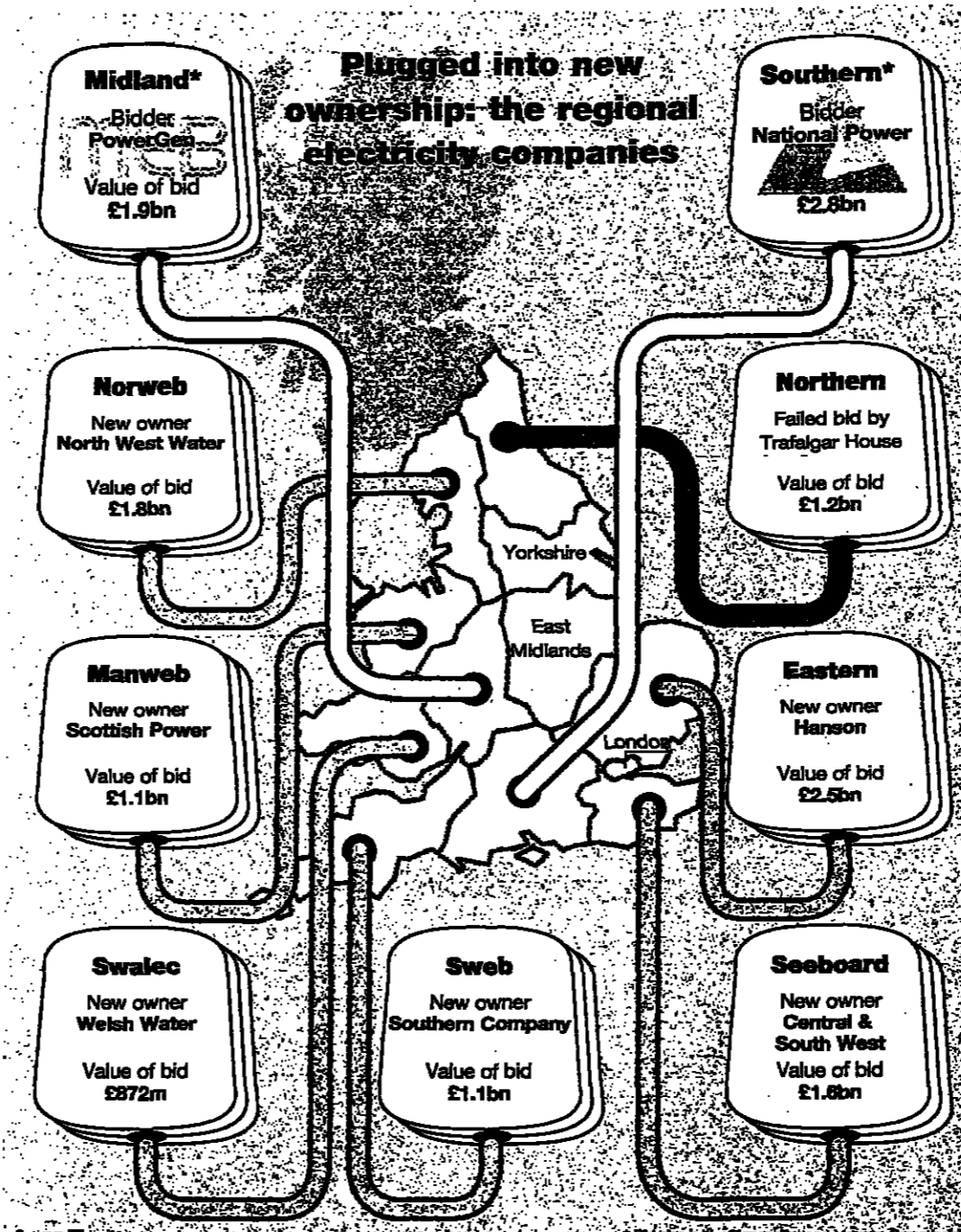
Mr John Reynolds, electricity analyst at stockbrokers James Capel, said the takeovers would lead to further cost reduction in the industry which the regulator would ensure was passed through to consumers. "This change of ownership is aimed directly at increasing efficiency which should be very good for customers. It will certainly put more pressure on the remaining independent regional electricity companies."

In the past year, seven of the 12 regional electricity companies which distribute power to consumers have been the subjects of bids, all but one of which have been successful. Analysts believe that several potential buyers, including overseas utilities, are poised to bid for the four remaining independent recs.

Despite this wave of activity, the structure of the industry has not yet changed radically. There have been no mergers between recs and of the six taken over, only one has been acquired by a company with any other interests in the UK electricity industry.

South Western Electricity and Seaboard have been bought by US utilities, Norweb and Swalec were acquired by the water companies in their regions, and the largest of the recs, Eastern, was the subject of an agreed takeover by Hanson, the industrial conglomerate.

In regulatory terms, the most significant deal was the acquisition by Scottish Power, after a fiercely fought hostile bid, of Manweb, the Chester-based rec. This was the only bid to raise the question of whether it was desirable to bring



together a generator with a distributor in a vertically integrated company.

When the electricity industry in England and Wales was privatised in 1990, generation was deliberately kept separate from the supply and distribution of electricity which was in the hands of the recs. The government believed that, at that stage, integrated companies would have too much market power and might sell their own electricity to their captive consumers even if cheaper power was available elsewhere.

In Scotland, by contrast, the industry was privatised as two integrated companies - Scottish Power and Scottish Hydro-Electric. Although Scottish Power supplies only a limited amount of electricity to the market in England and

Wales, Professor Stephen Littlechild, the industry regulator, concluded that the increased level of vertical integration was worthy of an MMC investigation. However, Mr Lang ignored his advice and waved the bid through.

This controversial decision, coupled with private indications that the government had nothing against vertical integration in principle, led PowerGen to make a recommended bid for Midlands, National Power, which had previously strenuously denied any intention of buying a rec, swiftly agreed a deal with Southern.

To the surprise of companies and investors alike, Mr Lang referred both bids to the MMC. This was widely seen as inconsistent with the

decision in the Scottish Power bid, and critics said Mr Lang was merely responding to the political pressure for a review amid the flurry of bids.

They also suggested that it would have been difficult for Mr Lang to ignore the advice of both the regulator and Mr John Bridgeman, the director-general of fair trading, who for the first time agreed an electricity bid should be referred.

Most of the opponents of the takeovers, notably independent recs such as Northern Electric, have argued that the increase in vertical integration is not the issue. After all, vertical integration is already increasing in England and Wales. Almost all the recs have developed generation interests, while National Power and PowerGen are now large suppliers of electricity in the com-

mercial and industrial markets where the recs' supply monopoly has been removed.

Mr John Reynolds, electricity analyst at James Capel, the stockbrokers, also points out that the vertical integration of the Scottish industry appears to have worked well. "Vertical integration brings some benefits and the MMC has praised the Scottish industry for its efficiency."

In its submission to the MMC opposing the takeovers, Northern Electric said the problem lay in the combination of increased vertical integration and with the dominant position of National Power and PowerGen in the wholesale power market in England and Wales.

In an attempt to reduce this influence, the regulator has required the two generators to make large disposals of generating stations. PowerGen has already agreed to lease two plants to Hanson's Eastern subsidiary, which is also in the bidding for three National Power stations. Even after these disposals, however, it is estimated that the two generators will still set the price in the wholesale market 60 per cent of the time. Rivals are worried that allowing them a significantly higher share of the supply market will put competitors at a serious disadvantage.

The head of one of the remaining independent recs claimed the impact could be so severe that the company would have to consider selling itself to a larger group. "If the bids go through I will be on the phone immediately asking to join the club."

But the MMC's majority report concedes the plant disposals enforced on the generators will mean that there will be "a broadly satisfactory competitive environment from 1997". It adds that the loss of the recs' monopoly over supply to homes in 1998 should increase competition further.

Mr Dieter Helm, director of Oxford Economic Research Associates, says that whatever the problems caused by the generators' dominance of the pool, they would be made only marginally worse by allowing the bids.

For the City, the arguments about the pros and cons of the bids are now largely irrelevant since Mr Lang is widely expected to give PowerGen and National Power the go-ahead to renew their offers by the end of this month.

Investors had expected a positive regulatory response and renewed bids from the generators - so share prices rose only modestly yesterday. But some analysts believe the markets are underestimating the prices that Southern and Midlands will be able to extract from the generators.

Mr Reynolds predicts the generators will be forced to pay about 5 per cent more than the current market prices for Southern and Midlands, and that bids for some of the other regional companies are likely. Whatever the outlook for electricity consumers, the party is not yet over for investors.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Strong euro may prove to be highly regarded in EU

From Mr Peter Coldrick.  
Sir, Robert Paston says the name for the new European currency - the euro - is ubiquitous ("Referendum for a rainy day", April 3). Others have also been dismissive. This is all rather odd, particularly in view of the popularity, not least among journalists, of adding Euro- to all sorts of things. If Germans make an association between the health of the D-Mark and their regard for

their country, then might not people make an obvious, and positive, connection between a strong euro and the European Union.

Is this not the real, and rather clever, reason the name was chosen, and isn't this what many nationalists really fear?

Peter Coldrick,  
77 rue au Bois,  
Brussels B-1180, Belgium

From Mr Alan Pavelin.

Sir, Nobody seems to have realised that the government's referendum proposal is heavily weighted against joining a single European currency.

If the UK cabinet and parliament approve joining, the electorate will have the chance of vetoing that decision through a referendum. If, however, either the cabinet or parliament decides against Britain joining, the electorate will have no

opportunity to veto that decision.

This is the much-valued "democracy" which the Eurosceptic advocates of a referendum have been claiming to uphold. I am amazed that Kenneth Clarke, the chancellor of the exchequer, was taken in by this.

Alan Pavelin,  
172 Leeson Hill,  
Clonsilla,  
Kent BR7 6QL, UK

### Vague view of Christianity

From Mr Alistair Budd.  
Sir, Philip Crowe assigns a rather vague and nebulous purpose to Christianity ("to worship and share in communion with other people, and to work for justice") in his interview with the Gospel writers ("The miracle on breakfast radio", April 6). Christianity provides a deep and satisfying response to mankind's spiritual hunger. Christ, Jesus, was a saviour and humanity's need for healing and salvation in a practical and effective way. Jesus commanded his disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons, and said: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" (John 14:12). The Book of Acts records how the disciples responded to Jesus' words. A deeper commitment to the practice of genuine Christian healing is needed in the Christian church today.

Alistair Budd,  
20 rue du Nord,  
CH-1180 Rolle,  
Vaud,  
Switzerland

### Unfortunate view of cherished opera singer

From Mr Ronald J. Byrne.

Sir, It was hardly necessary for your opera critic, David Murray, to insult the memory of the late Lucia Popp in his review of the revival of the Royal Opera's *Arabella* ("Belle of the ball is back", March 29). He was hardly more flattering in his description of the current interpreter, Cheryl Studer ("matronly figure", indeed).

Lucia Popp was a singer greatly cherished by British audiences who were fortunate enough to hear her,

whether in London or, occasionally, at the Edinburgh Festival where she was the most charming and natural of recitalists with none of the "grande dame" qualities which Mr Murray so despises.

Mr Murray can surely indicate his preference for a particular singer without abuse of his/her rivals. The character of *Arabella* is particularly complex, in some places seeming cold and calculating. There have in fact been many fine *Arabellas*, notably Elizabeth Schwarzkopf,

Gundula Janowitz, and Kiri Te Kanawa, as well as Popp and Lisa Della Casa. It is perhaps unfortunate that Cheryl Studer, after early success in Strauss and Wagner, moved on to roles such as Lucia and *Aida*, otherwise she might well have joined the select band to whom I have referred.

Ronald J. Byrne,  
Top Flat East,  
203 Crow Road,  
Glasgow G11 7FY

### Scottish scheme identifies BSE-free herds

From Mr G.D. James.

Sir, Your article "Minister seeks to limit EU slaughter demand" (April 6) quotes Lord Lindsay as speaking of the inability "to distinguish the beef coming from BSE-free herds and other herds and therefore undermining the Scottish quality assurance scheme".

This remark by the Scottish Office minister responsible for agriculture needs correcting. The whole point of the Scottish quality

farm assurance scheme is to be able to trace animals right back to their farm of birth and this is in fact done.

Also, no farmer can be a member of the scheme unless he has been BSE-free for six years. A large number of Scottish beef herds are members of this farm assurance scheme. Every herd has its individual registration number carried by a metal tag in the animal's ear. Since 1985, this

number has been unique for the whole EU. Before then the number was unique in the UK.

I am very surprised that Lord Lindsay does not appear to be aware of the rules and records of his own department.

G.D. James,  
Kirkcubbin,  
Newtown Stewart,  
Wigtownshire, DG8 0BS, UK

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1520

Man in the News - Rainer Gut

# Gambler runs out of luck

Ian Rodger on the Swiss banker whose merger plan met a sharp rebuff

Rainer Gut, chairman of CS Holding, the financial services group built around the Credit Suisse bank, has long been admired by his peers for his willingness to take bold decisions.

But the feeling yesterday in Switzerland and the City of London was that Mr Gut, now in the twilight of his career, had made an embarrassing gaffe when he proposed merger talks with rival Union Bank of Switzerland last week.

The idea, briskly rejected by UBS, could have created the world's second largest bank after the recently merged Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, with assets of some \$F800bn and significant shares in all important international financial markets.

After a Zurich newspaper got wind of the proposal on Tuesday, Mr Gut rushed out a statement claiming a merger would be the kind of far-sighted solution needed to address "the challenges thrown up by the globalisation of financial services and the continuing restructuring process within Switzerland's banking industry".

But there was also, as so often in Mr Gut's strategic moves, an attempt to take quick advantage of a perceived opportunity. UBS's largest shareholder, the maverick Zurich

broker Martin Ebner, has been rallying support among other shareholders to block the board's nomination of Robert Studer, the former chief executive, as chairman at next Tuesday's annual shareholders' meeting.

In the past few weeks, the impression had been growing in Switzerland that Mr Ebner might succeed, as many large Swiss institutional fund managers were expressing dissatisfaction with Mr Studer's record.

Credit Suisse said in its statement that a merger discussion "could help ease the current confrontation between UBS and one of its big shareholders". But according to UBS, Mr Gut went much further in his telephone conversation with its chairman, Nikolaus Senn, insisting on an answer to his merger proposal before the UBS meeting.

UBS suspected that Credit Suisse, being a large Swiss securities dealer, might have a lot of UBS shares on its books. It concluded Mr Gut was sig-

nalling he might vote those, perhaps, decisive shares against Mr Studer unless it went along with his merger proposal.

Credit Suisse indignantly denied any attempt to blackmail UBS, but there was little it could do but retreat meekly when its rival brusquely rejected the merger idea.

Unless the clever Mr Gut is working on a longer range plan, his initiative is beginning to look like a botched attempt to imitate the spectacular exit last month by another grand old man of the Swiss business scene, Sandor's Marc Moret, who is 73, had been tending off pretenders to his throne for years, but he elegantly eliminated the issue earlier this year by concluding a merger agreement with Basle neighbour Ciba.

Mr Gut, who is a Ciba director, is said to have been much impressed by this deal. Now 64 and having dominated Credit Suisse since 1982, he, too, may have seen an opportunity to

make a dramatic and timely exit.

Even before the UBS merger proposal, Mr Gut's image in Swiss business circles was showing signs of tarnish.

His last big coup, the \$F1.6bn takeover of Swiss Volksbank in 1992, has gone badly wrong if it was a costly decision. Credit Suisse has had to spend more than \$F300m on restructuring Volksbank, and last summer removed more than \$F5bn in dodgy loans from the bank so that it could have a fresh start.

Privately, Credit Suisse officials admit the group might be better off today if it had never taken on Volksbank and had instead got out of retail banking in the overcrowded Swiss market. But they still believe that in the long term the decision to buttress their domestic funding base will pay off.

The group's other big strategic moves under his leadership - acquiring control of the First Boston investment bank in the US and creating a holding

structure for the whole group - no longer seem as inspired as they once did. Credit Suisse was forced to restructure First Boston and pump more capital in last year, but the US investment bank still ranks well behind its main US rivals in profits.

He is unusual among Swiss bankers in that his views on banking were formed in the innovative atmosphere of New York, where, during a four-year stint at Lazard Freres in the 1960s, he became convinced that commercial and investment bankers should be kept apart.

After joining Credit Suisse in 1971, he was able to impose that view in the Swiss bank, and form an investment banking joint venture, initially with White Weld, later First Boston, that would be kept at arm's length to buy, and then take off this afternoon, to return to the Middle Kingdom.

For it has been a testing five days trying to combine conscience with contracts, although both sides have tried to put Mr Li's visit back on a more even keel after a diplomatic row on Wednesday night nearly capsized it.

Regardless of the continued presence of a few human rights protesters outside the Chinese embassy, Mr Li's delegation yesterday signed another \$F71bn worth of contracts with French companies. Mr Li yesterday told the Paris chamber of commerce and industry that France and China should resolve their differences to reach a "stable long-term relationship", while the Elysee said Jacques Chirac, French president, had accepted in principle Mr Li's invitation to visit China.

The Li Peng visit to France has, once again, shown how difficult it is to strike the balance between a firm defence of western beliefs on human rights and the desire to profit from what is potentially the world's biggest market.

Mr Yves Galland, the foreign trade minister, jubilantly claimed that the Chinese premier's visit was "a complete success on the economic level", and argued that China's "economic development will help settle the human rights problem". But, inevitably, the French government has come in for a steady stream of criticism - mainly from the socialist opposition and from trade unions - for its quasi-royal treatment of the man considered responsible for the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

Mr Bernard Kouchner, a left-wing politician, complained that Mr Chirac should not be behaving solely as France's "premier tradesman". The criticism was a bit unfair as Mr Chirac's discussions with Mr Li were largely political and covered human rights as well as strategic issues such as nuclear proliferation. But the breadth of French political concern about China was demonstrated this week by more than 200 deputies and senators urging China to "decolonise" Tibet.

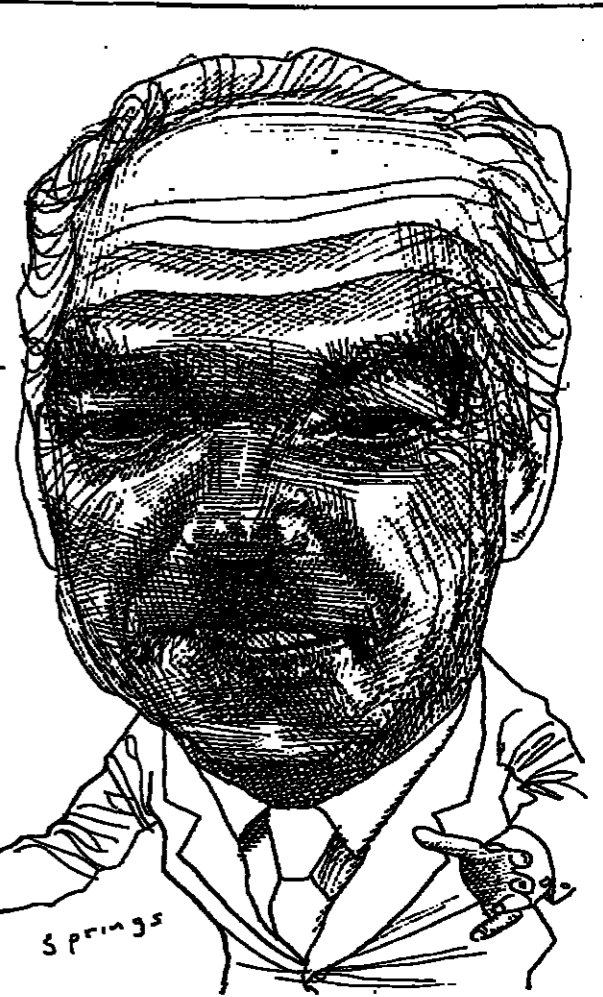
Dealing with China's com-

ate a holding structure. It was an immensely expensive move, as taxes had to be paid on the ownership transfers. The Swiss Federal Banking Commission insisted that Credit Suisse continue to provide full equity backing for all the group's subsidiaries.

The holding structure has perhaps enabled Credit Suisse to be more flexible but it has also been less coherent, with group subsidiaries occasionally competing with each other for business. Both UBS and Swiss Bank Corporation have kept integrated structures, claiming that big international clients want all their banking needs handled in a co-ordinated way.

Meanwhile, investors have been becoming increasingly impatient with CS Holdings' lacklustre performance. It may now be slightly larger than UBS in terms of assets and revenues, but as UBS hurtfully pointed out in its statement, "in terms of share performance, earnings per share, earnings per employee and shareholders' equity, [UBS] is clearly ahead of CS Holding".

Mr Gut was lying low yesterday, but bank officials acknowledged that he was injured and licking his wounds. He once said that he would rather be lucky than smart. This week, it looks as if he has been neither.



## Ratcatcher fails to show its teeth

Rentokil's bid for BET has been less hostile than other recent takeovers, says Geoff Dyer

When Rentokil launched its hostile \$2.1bn takeover bid for the rival business services group BET seven weeks ago, there was a strong sense of déjà vu in the City.

To many people it looked uncomfortably like a re-run of the \$3.5bn Granada takeover of Forte, which had just been completed amid acrimony and accusations of asset-stripping.

The bid thrust into the limelight Mr Clive Thompson, Rentokil's chief executive and - like Granada's Mr Gerry Robinson - one of the golden boys among City fund managers. Smooth-talking and immaculately turned out, Mr Thompson is not short on self-belief.

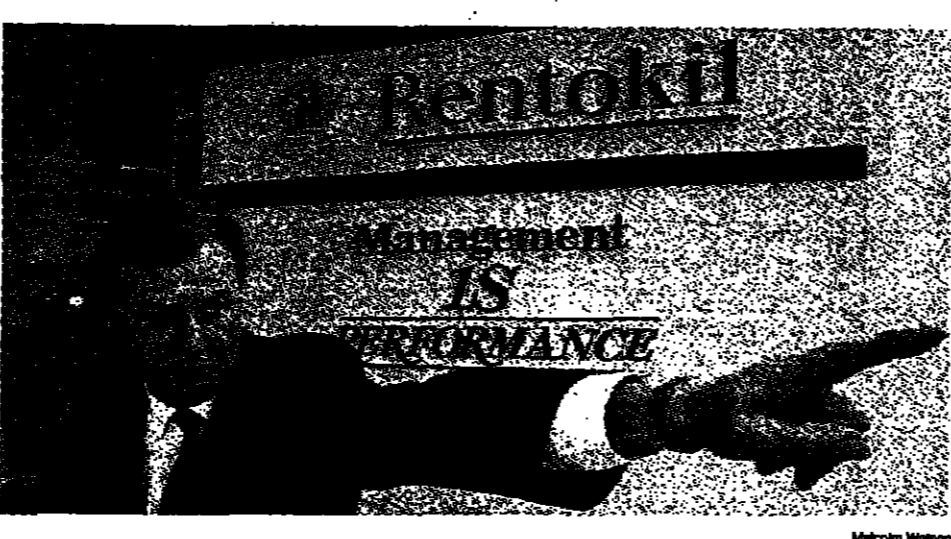
And like Mr Robinson, he came with an impressive corporate track record and boasted superior management skills. On the same day as Rentokil launched its bid, Mr Thompson unveiled an increase in earnings and profits of more than 20 per cent for the 14th year in a row.

The target company also bore some similarities to Forte. BET had recovered from near disaster in the early 1990s, when a debt-financed acquisition binge had nearly taken it down. Under the leadership since 1991 of Mr John Clark, a former US marine, BET claimed, like Forte, now to be producing impressive results which the market was ignoring.

The déjà vu was reinforced when the bid began with a round of personal insults. According to Mr Thompson, who this week raised Rentokil's offer by 14p per share: "BET was a company that was on the floor before Mr Clark took over, and it is now below the floorboards."

But the comparisons ended after the first few days. While Granada and Forte kept the pyrotechnics going throughout the bid, the Rentokil-BET match has been a much more low-key affair. One institutional shareholder described it as a "damp squib".

Some institutions are understood to have advised both sides against starting a public slanging match, which they said had been an unwelcome



Golden boy: Rentokil's chief Clive Thompson has been thrust into the limelight by the bid

part of the Granada-Forte bid. They added that BET had only a small proportion of private shareholders - the group that would be most susceptible to that approach.

BET has shunned the sort of "scorched-earth" defence developed by Forte, involving promises of special dividends and disposals of assets. The group had little scope for paying special dividends, since this would have endangered its future capital spending plans, the core of its defence.

A rapid disposals programme was also ruled out. After the group had spent the previous three years streamlining to a size Mr Clark said he was comfortable with, any disposals would have seemed like a panic measure. The companies he might have considered selling - such as its cleaning, recruitment and catering businesses - are low-margin concerns which would have been unlikely to fetch a good price in the circumstances of a bid.

There has been no queue of suitors willing to act as a "white knight" by making a higher offer for BET. As two of the biggest business services companies in the world, BET and Rentokil are almost unique and probably too large for rivals to swallow.

Nor has there been a real debate over strategy in this bid. Both chief executives have attempted to stir things up: Mr Clark insists that Rentokil wants to create a "muddled" conglomerate and will sell a large part of BET businesses; Mr Thompson claims BET is now on its third strategy in three years, with little idea of how to grow margins. But shareholders have, by and

large, taken a relaxed view. Says one: "When it comes down to it, this bid has always been about price and little else."

BET has thus adopted a two-pronged defence. The first element was to attack Rentokil's record and stock market rating - and it has been a failure.

After hitting its 20 per cent profits and earnings targets for so many years, some analysts felt that the scrutiny of a hostile takeover bid might expose some flaws in Rentokil's track record. However BET has not been able to reveal anything that undermines the Rentokil record. Since the beginning of the bid, Rentokil's shares have risen from 238p to 351p.

The second element of emphasising BET's growth record has been more successful. It was a slow start - some shareholders and analysts had become accustomed to Forte's more dramatic style - but gradually Mr Clark has been able to get his message across.

The group has produced a healthy increase in profits for the year to March 31, which are forecast to have risen by 22 per cent. A 28 per cent rise in dividends has been promised, with a further 20 per cent increase assured for next year.

Mr Clark has insisted that BET is now a fast-growing group, with the resources to spend heavily in sales and marketing and a strategy focused on high-margin areas. At times he has boasted many of the qualities Mr Thompson claims for Rentokil. "Clark has done rather well," says one of BET's biggest shareholders.

"He has mounted a spirited defence, with some good profits and dividend forecasts."

However Mr Clark has been unable to shake off the impression that he might be happy to return to the US, having delivered a respectable exit price for BET's shareholders - despite his protestations that "I chose to live in this country." His cause has not been helped by the news that he will make over \$2m from bonuses and options if the bid goes through.

Meanwhile Mr Thompson has largely kept out of the limelight since his initial burst of publicity when the offer was launched, emerging only to respond to BET's barbs. But he was back to his confident self this week when Rentokil increased its offer. Responding to suggestions that the group's growth was slowing, he claimed: "We have the opportunity and potential to keep growing by 20 per cent for the next 50 years."

With two weeks to go before the offer closes, the two chief executives have now begun a grueling trip around the institutions, lobbying for their support. The initial indications from BET's biggest shareholders is that they will side with Rentokil.

But Mr Clark is not giving up. "There is an old joke that ex-marines never get tired - they attack, attack, attack," he says. Rentokil's increased offer has disappointed the institutions, he claims, and given BET a chance.

However he is facing an uphill task. The betting is that as in Granada-Forte, the City institutions will back the group with the more impressive track record.

## David Buchan on France's tricky balancing act with China

The French government will breathe a deep sigh of relief when Mr Li Peng, prime minister of China, rounds off his visit to France with a trip to Toulouse to see the Airbus aircraft that China has agreed to buy, and then takes off this afternoon to return to the Middle Kingdom.

# Sweet and sour banquet in Paris

For it has been a testing five days trying to combine conscience with contracts, although both sides have tried to put Mr Li's visit back on a more even keel after a diplomatic row on Wednesday night nearly capsized it.

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Dealing with China's com-

munist leadership is particularly difficult for France for two reasons. One is France's conviction that its 1789 revolution makes it the guardian of the rights of man; it was in this tradition that it gave a temporary home to Mr Deng Xiaoping, now communist China's elder statesman, when he was a young man. But, as the left-wing Liberation newspaper commented this week: "It is dangerous to want to be the country of the rights of man. One risks being taking seriously."

The other factor is more recent - France's 1982 sale of Mirage jets and missiles to Taiwan. In retaliation, Beijing closed down the French consulate in Guangzhou and froze French companies out of the Chinese market. In 1984, Mr Edouard Balladur, then France's prime minister, started fence-mending. This began well with a French declaration that it would no longer supply any offensive weapons to Taiwan.

However, when he visited China two years ago, Mr Balladur ran into trouble. He tried to handle the human rights issue as discreetly as possible, but the Chinese authorities made this virtually impossible

by rounding up - in advance of Mr Balladur's arrival in various Chinese cities - all the local dissidents they could lay their hands on. As a result, Mr Balladur found himself constantly pestered by accompanying French journalists about dissidents, and made the mistake of showing himself just as peeved with the French press as with Beijing.

This week, President Chirac and Mr Alain Juppé, the prime minister, resolved to be a bit more forthright, but nearly found themselves in the same sort of mess. For Wednesday's official banquet, linked to the signing of the all-important \$1.5bn Airbus contract, Mr Juppé had prepared a toast. The speech, on the advice of Mr Francois Plassant, the aptly named French ambassador in Peking, contained an anodyne reference to France seeking "dialogue, but not confrontation" with China on human rights. The reference, however, was enough to anger Mr Li. His subsequent 90-minute delay in turning up for the contract signing and dinner sent French officials into a cold sweat.

In the event, Mr Li finally agreed to Mr Juppé's suggestion that neither should deliver their toasts. Contracts were

signed, dinner was eaten, Mr Juppé leaked the text of his toast to the press, and the Chinese side pretended their premier's delay had been purely technical. In this ambiguous way, honour was satisfied on both sides, just as it was over the accompanying issue of "the list". Mr Hervé de Charette, the French foreign minister, said he handed over to his Chinese opposite number a list of 20 Chinese political prisoners, requesting their release. The Chinese denied any list had been delivered, then suggested the names on it were incorrect and even that Mr de Charette's piece of paper was blank.

Yet the following day Mr Li made no fuss when he was reported to have agreed on the need for a constructive human rights dialogue. Why did the Chinese premier temporarily lose his cool? Explanations vary from the trivial - Mr Li's pique at being greeted by too junior a minister on his arrival at Orly airport - to the more substantive possibility that the Chinese leadership is now ready to talk to the west about human rights, but only in private.

France has, in fact, been instrumental in getting the European Union to open, as with Iran, a "critical dialogue" with Beijing - a dialogue, in other words, that is courteous but allows differences to be freely aired. Mr Chirac agreed this with Mr Li at the EU-Asian summit in Bangkok earlier this spring. At two subsequent meetings between EU and Chinese diplomats, China has said it will reform its penal code. Under UN-sponsored delegations on human rights, and sign UN protocols on political and economic rights.

Though cautiously welcoming these promises, the EU is seeking further pledges from China and has joined the US in tabling a resolution on China to be put before the UN human rights commission in Geneva.

French diplomats say it is too early to judge what "critical dialogue" with China will produce. But they point to the merit of now having a joint EU position on the issue, after some initial reservations among Nordic members of the EU and the UK, which had wanted a tougher approach of "condemnation" in the Geneva resolution. "At least we are now all walking the same tightrope in dealing with Beijing," said one French official.



Lukewarm welcome: Li Peng with Jacques Chirac (right)



Capital asset: London's Waterloo station

The UK's Conservative government hopes to launch next week a further stage of its rail privatisation programme with the publication of the pathfinder prospectus for the flotation of Railtrack, the company that owns the track, signalling equipment and stations.

The proposed sell-off falls short of a considered and mature national rail transport strategy. Selling valuable national assets for a fraction of their real worth is irresponsible. To privatise the company in a single share sale, it has been endowed with contracts that require the train operating companies to pay generous access charges to use the network. If there is no change of government, the taxpayer will pay the price for years to come in the subsidies the operators will need to be profitable.

Next week, the opposition Labour party will initiate a parliamentary debate to halt the sale of Railtrack, a debate Labour could win given the size of the government's majority. However, if the sale proceeds, prospective investors will want to

know Labour's position on the company's future. A Labour government would aim to create a cohesive and responsible public railway service. This will involve three instruments of control - regulation, subsidy and a gradual increase in public ownership.

The most immediate area of influence over Railtrack will be through regulation, using the considerable powers given to the rail regulator in the Railways Act 1993. These are greater than any the secretary of state ever had over the governing board of the state-owned railway.

Before privatisation, the transport secretary's greatest weapon lay in the right to dismiss the board - a sanction so powerful that it could never be used. The regulator needs no such weapon since his existing powers are more focused and thus

more effective. For example, the regulator can set Railtrack's access charges, which comprise at least 80 per cent of its revenue. He can determine what Railtrack does with its valuable property portfolio, and, in this way, ensure that both the land and the proceeds from development and sales are used for railway purposes.

He can also compel the company to grant access to new train operators, and change the charges and conditions imposed on them. And he can make changes to Railtrack's network licence to strengthen existing controls and introduce new ones, subject to the approval of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The regulator is independent of the secretary of state, and operates under a set of statutory duties with

relatively few limits on his powers. The duties are generally drawn, and require him, for example, to protect the interests of users, promote efficiency and economy, and enhance the use of the network. But a simple amendment to the Railways Act 1993 is all that would be needed for a Labour government to enhance his accountability to the transport secretary.

Labour is not interested in becoming involved in the day-to-day business of regulating the railways. However, an elected government should be concerned about the long-term future of the rail network. The relationship between the secretary of state and the regulator will be adjusted to reflect this.

A Labour government would expect the regulator to make greater use of his powers to promote

the public interest. Most people who value and respect the railways know that Railtrack has been left with far too much scope for making profits at the expense of its customers, the travelling public and the railfreight users.

That has to change substantially. Railtrack has to be far more responsive to the needs of its customers and the regulator must use his powers to ensure this is the case.

Labour also wants to reorganise the subsidy paid to the rail system, which at present amounts to £2bn a year. This is now paid to the train operators which use it to pay access charges for the Railtrack network. Without the subsidies, the train operators would be loss-making.

In the Netherlands and Sweden, government subsidies are put directly into the rail network which

allows the train operating companies to be profitable without subsidy. This approach means that rail transport is financed in the same way as roads - the public finance goes to the infrastructure.

Labour will seek to pay the subsidy direct to Railtrack and reach agreements on the best use of taxpayers' money. My favoured way of acquiring ownership would be to take equity in the company in return for part of the annual subsidy. It would clearly be wrong to give £2bn a year to a company that might be sold for as little as £1.5bn without a proper return on public investment.

If Railtrack is privatised, its shareholders should not expect a Labour government to allow its transport policy objectives to be frustrated simply because the rail network is no longer in the public sector. Railtrack should be regarded as the trustee of assets, which must be protected, enhanced and operated in the public interest. That is a role unlike that of any ordinary commercial undertaking.

The author is the opposition Labour party's shadow transport secretary

## Personal View - Clare Short

# A better way to run the railway

The Labour party's strategy would take more account of the public interest

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MARKETS REPORT

Dollar steady

By Philip Gawth

and at \$1.5113, from \$1.5137.

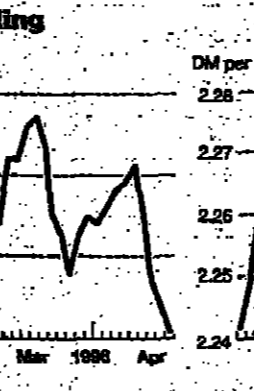
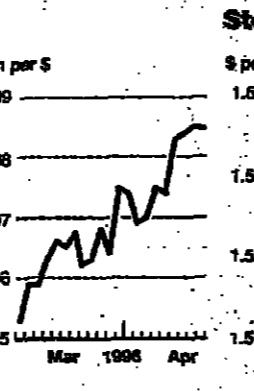
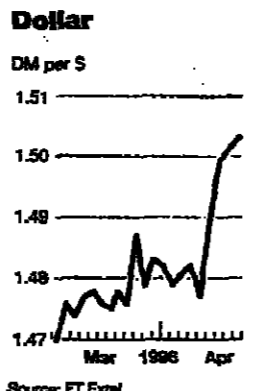
The dollar yesterday performed steadily, finishing the week with the break above DM1.50 still firmly intact.

Currency markets took comfort from the solid performance of the US bond market, despite continued signs of strength in the economy. The dollar finished in London at DM1.5037, from DM1.5013, and at ¥106.875, from ¥106.49.

In Europe currencies were fairly steady following the recent losses of the D-Mark. It finished at FF73.394 against the French franc, from FF73.369.

The Portuguese escudo finished at Esc102.7, from Esc102.8, against the D-Mark after the Bank of Portugal cut its repo rate by 20 basis points, to 7.6 per cent.

Sterling was unmoved by the government's most recent by-election defeat, which saw its majority shrink to one. It closed unchanged at DM2.2735.



Source: FT Data

The strong performance of the US bond market increased optimism that the circumstances might be falling into place for the long-awaited, presumably dollar positive, outflow of Japanese portfolio capital.

Mr Neil MacKinnon, chief economist at Citibank in London, said the market's dollar optimism appeared to be based on the hope of a cut in German interest rates when the Bundesbank council meets on Thursday. He was cautious about the quality of the dollar's rally, saying it had been driven largely by interbank traders and US hedge funds, rather than reflecting large

that the rally in some European currencies against the D-Mark could be nearing a close. "A lot of these currencies are now running into territory where they have little interest rate protection," French ten year bonds, for example, are only yielding 11 basis points more than German bunds. Mr MacKinnon said it had been against a similar backdrop that the 1993 ERM turbulence had taken place.

He believes the dollar is "days away from a very big move". Part of his optimism is based on momentum indicators, which chart the relationship between the current spot price and the price some fixed period previously (eg three months ago). On this basis, the dollar this week broke decisively against the D-Mark and Swiss franc.

Mr Marber reminds that on a closing basis, the dollar's low point was DM1.5038 almost a year ago, on April 19, 1995, when the dollar's average advance in rallies dating back to 1988 has been 27 per cent. With the current advance only just over 10 per cent, it should have some way to go yet. When the move comes, though, it could be fast. No rally since 1988 has lasted more than 17% months, suggesting that fireworks may be expected in the next five months.

POUND SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE POUND

Table with columns: Apr 12, Closing mid-point, Change on day, Bid/offer spread, Day's high/low, One month rate, Three months rate, One year rate, Bank of England index. Rows include Europe, Americas, Asia, and various regional currencies.

DOLLAR SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE DOLLAR

Table with columns: Apr 12, Closing mid-point, Change on day, Bid/offer spread, Day's high/low, One month rate, Three months rate, One year rate, J.P. Morgan index. Rows include Europe, Americas, Asia, and various regional currencies.

EMU EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNIT RATES

Table with columns: Apr 12, Bid, Offer, Rate, Change on day, % change, % spread, Div. Dividend. Rows include Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, France, Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, UK, and others.

CROSS RATES AND DERIVATIVES

Table with columns: Apr 12, Bid, Offer, Rate, Change on day, % change, % spread, Div. Dividend. Rows include Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and others.

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BASE LENDING RATES

Table with columns: Bank, Rate, % change. Rows include Adams & Company, Allied Trust Bank, Anglo Bank, Bank of America, Bank of Canada, Bank of China, Bank of India, Bank of Japan, Bank of Korea, Bank of London, Bank of Mexico, Bank of New York, Bank of Paris, Bank of Rome, Bank of Scotland, Bank of Singapore, Bank of South Africa, Bank of Sweden, Bank of Switzerland, Bank of Taiwan, Bank of Thailand, Bank of Tokyo, Bank of Union, Bank of Vietnam, Bank of West Indies, Bank of Yugoslavia, Bank of Zambia, Bank of Zimbabwe, and others.

UK INTEREST RATES

Table with columns: Apr 12, Bid, Offer, Rate, Change on day, % change, % spread, Div. Dividend. Rows include 3 month, 6 month, 9 month, 12 month, and others.

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WORLD INTEREST RATES

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EURO CURRENCY INTEREST RATES

Table with columns: Apr 12, Bid, Offer, Rate, Change on day, % change, % spread, Div. Dividend. Rows include Belgium, Denmark, D-Mark, Dutch Guilder, French Franc, Portuguese Esc, Spanish Ptas, Sterling, Swiss Franc, US Dollar, and others.

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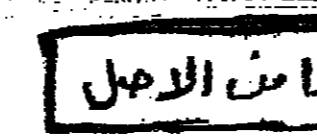
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Table listing various unit trusts such as AB Unit Trusts, AIA Equity & Law Unit Trusts, and others with their respective prices and performance metrics.

Table listing unit trusts under the heading 'Barclays Unit Trusts' and 'Barclays Global Unit Trusts'.

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Guide to pricing of Authorised Unit Trusts. Compiled with the assistance of AUTIF SS. INITIAL CHARGE: Charge made by a unit trust manager... HISTORIC PRICING: The letter 'C' denotes... BUYING PRICE: Also called offer price... SELLING PRICE: Also called bid price... TREATMENT OF MANAGERS' PERIODIC CHARGE: The letter 'C' denotes... EXIT CHARGES: The letter 'C' denotes that an exit charge may be made... TIME: The time means alongside the fund manager's name in the unit trust's name...

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Main table containing various fund categories: North City Unit Trusts, Scottish Widows, Thaxby Unit Trusts, Morgan Grenfell Property Funds, Stock Horse Life Assurance, Commercial Union Group, and various Life & Pension Plans. Each entry includes fund name, price, and contact information.

INSURANCES

Table listing insurance companies and their respective policies, including details on coverages and terms.

OTHER UK UNIT TRUSTS

Table listing other UK unit trusts, including fund names and their current values.

Living

Tale

سوق المال

# Weekend FT



Sellafield at dusk: the plant is accused of being the centrepiece of a 'Whitetail farce' covering the whole back end of the nuclear industry

## Living with the nuclear mess

What can be done about Sellafield? David Lascelles reports on an insider's view of the plant's potential disasters

Inside the Sellafield nuclear fuel complex in Cumbria there is a chamber with massive concrete walls containing a muddy green goo. It is a solution for treating plutonium nitrate, a deadly by-product of nuclear power plants.

This is not just a poison in the ordinary sense, for it contains enough radioactive material to create a nuclear explosion, should it become too concentrated.

This nearly happened in September 1992. A welded joint inside the chamber failed, and 30 litres of the stuff was sprayed around the floor and walls. It collected in mounds, dangerously close to the size which would result in a nuclear chain reaction, similar to that which occurs when two lumps of plutonium are brought together in a nuclear bomb.

The material had to be cleaned up with extreme urgency (before it could collect

in larger mounds. But it was so highly radioactive that, even in protective suits, workers could enter the chamber for no more than a few minutes at a time.

With great courage, the workers removed the mounds in a carefully worked out sequence to avoid creating a pattern which could set them off. Had the plant been treating military grade plutonium, rather than the less concentrated type used for nuclear power stations, a terrible explosion would almost certainly have resulted.

This horrific incident - let alone all the others which have made Sellafield notorious - seems quite enough to justify its title as Britain's most feared, and hated, industrial site. The details have been made public in a remarkable new book\* about the plant, written by a former director of British Nuclear Fuels, the plant's owner. He is Harold Bolter, once the industrial editor of the *Financial Times*, who

became BNFL's longest serving board member with responsibility for, among other things, safety and security.

Although many of the incidents Bolter describes are now in the public domain, his account is the first insider's view of the deeply secretive world of nuclear reprocessing. This shines a grimly fascinating light on the forthcoming privatisation of Britain's nuclear energy industry.

This month's tenth anniversary of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in the Ukraine will focus the world's attention once again on the safety of nuclear plants. But a far greater problem for the nuclear industry is the "back end": the spent fuel, the radioactive waste, the decommissioning, all of which are Sellafield's business. These remain huge problems for every country's nuclear industry, even the safest. They cannot be shrugged off, as Chernobyl was, with "it couldn't happen here".

Nuclear power may have its advantages: no fossil fuels, no smoke, no greenhouse gases. But are they really worth the mess that it leaves behind; or the huge financial risks when the cost of each plant is measured in billions and uncertainties about safety can double the price?

Bolter is one of those who thinks we do need nuclear power because everything else will eventually run out. He also believes that Sellafield and BNFL have impressive technical achievements to their name, and deserve to succeed.

So it is especially worrying to find that he has grave doubts about key aspects of British nuclear policy: the economic viability of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel, the decision to privatise, and the unanswered questions about the final disposal of nuclear waste.

Because of his experience, Bolter must be taken seriously even though he was forced to

resign from BNFL in 1993 after allegations - from which a police inquiry later cleared him - that he used the company's contractors to redecorate his house.

Nuclear power has such a bad name today that it is hard to recall the grand confidence almost 40 years ago, when the young Queen Elizabeth went to Sellafield to inaugurate Calder Hall, the world's first commercial nuclear power station. The event was hailed as evidence that Britain was still at the forefront of world technology. Nuclear power would provide boundless cheap energy - and throw off a useful by-product in the form of plutonium for Britain's H-bomb to secure its seat at the world's top table.

In those inspirational times, the problem of dealing with nuclear waste seemed distant and small. Sellafield's early function was to manufacture nuclear fuel and recover the plutonium afterwards, rather than deal with the resulting

waste. But the attitude of its early managers with their "secret society culture" and "scientific virility" as Bolter puts it, sowed the seeds for the appalling public relations difficulties which have dogged Sellafield ever since.

Shortly after the plant opened, in 1957, one of the two nuclear piles there was destroyed by fire. This was Europe's worst nuclear accident until Chernobyl. So ill-equipped was the plant to deal with the disaster that volunteers without protective clothing had to handle smouldering and highly radioactive reactor parts with scaffolding poles.

No one thought to alert the local population, and children played happily out of doors while radioactive contamina-

tion poured out of the sky. There was no evacuation plan, and no fast route away from the site (there still is not one).

Sellafield's civil service bosses thought it was "a little local difficulty" with no wider consequences. They little understood the huge public fears which nuclear accidents would later inspire. Although nobody was killed directly, it was later thought that the accident caused an additional 100 cancer cases in the UK.

As time went by, BNFL became, if anything, even more isolated from the British public. When, in the 1970s, it exploited its skills to take in spent fuel from overseas customers, it was branded by the

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Next week - ROYALTY  
The start of a six-week examination of Europe's royal families



Joe Rogaly

## Tale of two EU cities

To build New London Tony Blair's New Labour needs new money

Call it crass, call it Tory, let it pass as the same old story, but we must inquire, ever so politely - how much? That is the big one, the killer-diller, the question to be put to any politician. This week it is asked of Tony Blair, putative saviour of London.

Alas, it remains unanswered, especially when it specifies the financing of the Labour leader's proposed new Greater London Authority. Cities are expensive toys, as they can tell you in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Tokyo and Berlin - to name some of the most highly priced. New Labour cannot create New London for free.

Doubtless Mr Blair knows as much. He is, however, busy. His eyes are set firmly on turning everyone, of whatever shade of political opinion, into an admirer. I sometimes fancy his real long-term plan is to become chancellor of a future Friedrich Hayek/Adam Smith foundation, funded by George Soros. Such is the foxy that sprouts in the spring.

Yet there is a fine line between wowing one's natural opponents and embracing them with shameless abandon. You may think Mr Blair crossed it during his visit to the US this week. He could reply, with asperity, that he has his opinion poll leads to count, and the votes cast for

Labour in Thursday's by-election to re-enter into the great equation.

Sure he has. Great, Tony. Well done. So how much? On Wednesday his Labour party put forward proposals for a new elected, strategic authority for Britain's capital city.

Mr Blair has said he would like it to be run by a directly elected mayor. This sounds sensible, as any reader of Simon Jenkins' *Accountable to None*, now in paperback, might agree. London is at present managed by 32 elected borough councils, plus an array of quangos, puppet organisations whose strings lead back to the cabinet and the Treasury.

Since it is large enough to be a city-state the conurbation on the Thames needs a proper government. Some body, possessed of real authority, should be engaged, full-time, in promoting its interests, keeping it ahead in the world marketplace for tourism, or financial services. Transport, land-use planning, infrastructure, have to be administered. Central government, and Brussels, have to be pestered for funds. The executive doing all that should not be fragmented.

So we must cheer Labour's proposal. The idea is a runner. It needs work, as we shall see, but it is a start. Now step back

for a moment and consider where it has to get to. You can do this by looking at Berlin, which marks the other, eastern, end of the constellation of cities that stretches across the northern half of the European Union. Its story is instructive.

Berlin is a true city-state, a *Land* within the German federation. Its constitution, its forms of governance, are a beauty to behold. On May 5 its

**To me, New Berlin sounds intriguing, but a city has to pay its debts**

citizens will vote in a referendum on whether to merge with surrounding Brandenburg, a rural *Land* that has been invaded by Berliners seeking the suburban life. The arguments will doubtless cover such lofty matters as the need for an integrated transport strategy, but in reality, I suspect, the question will be, "how much?"

For Brandenburg is poor and Berlin is broke. Brandenburgers may be less than anxious to assume Berlin's debts; the sophisticates of the city are doubtless unenthusiastic

about the backwardness of the surrounding state. Federal subsidies to the former West Berlin have been reduced or withdrawn since the wall fell and the city was reunified. About 24,000 public jobs are to be cut. Federal civil servants are clinging to their offices in Bonn, resisting the celebrated plan to move to what some see as Germany's, others as Europe's, future capital.

On Monday the Anglo-German Foundation\* publishes a report comparing the economies of London and Berlin. Its lead professor is Sam Aaronovitch, director of the local economic policy unit at London's South Bank university. He says Berlin sees itself as a regional capital within central and eastern Europe. In no sense will it compete against London, Tokyo or New York.

To me, New Berlin sounds intriguing, but a city has to pay its debts. When I visited its separated halves before 1989 each was a matter of wonder, each for a different reason. Now insolvency overshadows all.

We do not know whether London is solvent; no city-wide budget exists. Labour's paper on an elected authority for the city has clearly been drafted by masters of wishful thinking. Present services, it says, are financed by council tax and central government

grants. "This will continue." There will be a bit of borrowing here, public/private partnerships there.

West Berlin was on a federal drip-feed, which is why its bureaucracy became so large, its government machine so overstuffed. For most of the years since 1979 London's boroughs, inefficient as many of them are, have been working to ever-tighter centrally controlled budgets. There may be some savings on sackings and unnecessary service cuts in the 32 boroughs, but they are unquantifiable.

If New Labour is to improve democracy, or infrastructure, or services in the capital city it will have to find additional revenue. This would best be extracted from the inhabitants of the city and its businesses. It is no good electing an authority and asking it to depend on Treasury hand-outs, or lottery windfalls; the election would be a waste of time. So - how much?

\* 11 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP.

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HMS/FT/16

PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

# How to grow a diamond

Its special properties make this mineral ideal for electronic uses, writes Andrew Derrington

Everybody knows that diamonds are dazzling to look at and harder than any other mineral. But a diamond's crystalline structure endows it with other extreme physical properties. It is one of the best conductors of heat and one of the best electrical insulators. This unique combination makes diamond an ideal material for a range of uses from cooling supercomputers to detecting ultraviolet.

Chemically, diamond is far from exotic. It is nothing more than crystals of carbon, itself the main constituent of soot. Natural diamonds, formed under extremes of temperature and pressure, are found in deposits of kimberlite, a rare volcanic rock. Synthetic diamond can be produced at low pressures by a process called chemical vapour decomposition.

Varying the conditions of the CVD process changes the rate of growth and the quality of the diamond. James Adair and Rajiv Singh of the University of Florida, Gainesville, recently developed a

new process to cover the substrate with tiny diamond crystals; they grew the largest ever synthetic diamond - 30cm in diameter and 1.8mm thick.

Diamond owes its special properties to its crystalline structure. The atoms in a crystal are bound together by sharing electrons with each other in a sort of atomic handshake. Each atom becomes stable when it shares enough extra electrons to fill its outermost shell - all its chemically reactive hands are now full and are no longer available to form new chemical links. Carbon has four electrons in its outermost shell and space for another four, so diamond crystals

have a repeating tetrahedral structure: each atom of carbon holds hands with four neighbours.

Carbon is the smallest atom with a four-electron outer shell. So its "arms" are very short, very strong and vibrate at very high frequencies. This is what makes diamond so tough, and such a good conductor of heat - about five times better than copper at room temperature.

Its high electrical resistance comes about because the electrons are held so tightly in "handshakes" that it requires a great deal of energy to liberate one to make it carry electric current.

The high thermal conductivity of

diamond is put to use in the electronics industry. Components that produce large amounts of heat, such as Gunn diodes used to generate microwaves, are bonded to a heat spreader made from a tiny diamond wafer. The spreader conducts the heat away to a more massive "heat sink", which may itself be water cooled.

Miniaturisation, which brings the increases in speed and power demanded by the supercomputer industry, aggravates the heat dissipation problem. Speculative designs for future supercomputers contain cubic stacks of chips mounted on diamond heat spreaders and surrounded by water-

cooled heat sinks. Diamond is not yet cheap enough for use on this scale.

The stability of electrons also accounts for the transparency of diamond. Light is absorbed by exciting electrons so that they jump from one state into another. Visible and infra-red light do not contain enough energy to move an electron out of a bond, so diamond does not absorb these wavelengths.

The much higher energy photons of ultraviolet light are absorbed, making diamond an excellent material for building detectors of these wavelengths. One potential application for diamond UV-detectors, blind as they are to visible

and infra-red radiation, would be machines for automatically reading sequences of genes.

The ultimate use of synthetic diamond, according to Trevor Evans of Reading University, would be as a substitute for silicon to make semiconductor devices that would work in extreme conditions of temperature and radiation.

Silicon, like carbon, has four electrons in its outer shell. The essential materials for making semiconductor devices are "n-type" silicon, where some of the silicon atoms are replaced by a group 5 atom such as phosphorus with an extra electron in its outer shell, and "p-type" silicon, where the

replacement is a group 3 atom, with one electron less.

Unfortunately, diamond is much less receptive than silicon to such substitutions. Boron fits into the carbon lattice to make p-type semiconducting diamond, but the only group 5 element that fits in is nitrogen, which does not produce the expected semiconducting behaviour. "Sometimes elementary semiconductor physics is not adequate to account for the properties of impurity atoms," says Alan Collins, a physicist from King's College London.

Although diamond transistors have been produced by Kobe Steel in the US and by Daimler Benz in Germany, they do not work very well. "The fact that you can only get p-type diamond is very limiting," says Collins. So it looks as if it will be some time before the ultimate fashion accessory, a diamond transistor radio, hits the streets.

The author is professor of psychology at the University of Nottingham.

Minding Your Own Business

## Change of career produces a silver lining

David Spark meets a businessman who spent nine years teaching

Tony Kelly is a silversmith and he regards himself as an anachronism. In the age of the computer and the on-line shopping, he makes the gifts and mementoes that you cannot buy in the shops when you are looking for something special for a particular occasion.

"I take all the requirements and put together a design and a product to suit the customer," he says. "It has to be a good design, and I have to be able to live with it going out of the door into someone else's house."

"I make only one of anything. And I insist on the client being involved in the design process."

One of his most striking works is a memorial to a saxophone player, whose saxophone is held by two silver hands.

Kelly has made large pieces for the military, particularly the gunners, but now commissions tend to be smaller - rings and jewellery. He is also well known around Kendal, in Cumbria, for the task he has set himself - to make a silver chess set, one piece a year. He has made four, rather forbidding, fantasy figures so far, and is working on two more. "I have only 26 to go, which means I'm going to be a very old man when I finish," he says.

Born in Kendal, Kelly was brought up on the outskirts of Liverpool and went to Hopwood Hall, near Manchester, to study furniture design. His tutor was the silversmithing lecturer, Ron Denny. "Denny demonstrated you could get hold of a bit of metal, heat it up, put it in acid and bash it, and produce something really beautiful. The scales fell from my eyes: it was a damascene conversion. When you're at school you don't get the chance to do things like that."

After Hopwood Hall, Kelly got the chance to offer the same experience to pupils at

De la Salle College, Salford. The principal, Brother Claude, wanted to add design to his arts-and-science curriculum. He appointed a brilliant graphic designer, Colin Gray, as head of department. Kelly and a furniture expert, Tony Livesey, joined him.

"I didn't even have a workshop when I started," he says. "I had a courtyard that was going to be built into a workshop. I made all the major purchases and spent nine years sending pupils to Middlesex College of Art, or Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield."

Then, in the late 1970s, the government ended the direct grant. Schools had either to go independent or come under the local authority. Salford took over De la Salle and made it a sixth-form college. Kelly had to rejoin for his own job.

He sympathised with the council's aspirations for comprehensive education but resented the way it did things.

Instead, he decided to set up on his own. "I'd spotted a little niche in the arts and crafts market in Kendal. I spent many summers as a child here with a favourite aunt and uncle. And I'm still here, not making a fortune but making a living," he says.

"During the summer of 1977 I spent a lot of time just going round the area to assess what I could see as a market. I made a few pieces which I sold to shops. Then I had a conversation with someone who was working at my aunt's house. He had workshop space."

Kelly joined a sort of craft centre, which featured an antiques restorer, a cabinet-maker, an upholsterer and a silversmith. "When I look back, it's a naive bizarre. I knew nothing about running a business. I didn't have a job; I had an idea. My wife was a teacher and she didn't have a job. We had a three-year-old daughter. But I had a bank manager in Manchester who believed me and let me have an overdraft secured against

our Manchester house.

"I still need a working overdraft. I work like hell to reduce it."

"Within three months, I started making things and people just started appearing. They either wanted to buy what I'd already made or they were interested in having me make something special for them." Gradually, a network evolved.

"There was interest from the antiques trade, whether I'd do refurbishment and restoration work, which I did. I would rather make new but, because it brings people in, I'm happy to have some repair work."

Kelly leases his shop and lives in the flat above. He sells little from the shop but it is an



Tony Kelly at work in his shop: 'I'm still here, not making a fortune but making a living'

essential "window for people to see things and to see me working. My counter sales are small. I don't make widgets. I try things out. People get interested and come in and see the possibilities."

He never advertises but gets publicity in the local papers if he does something special or unusual. For the city of Ripon, for example, he handled the silversmithing for the Queen when she presented Maundy money in 1985.

In 1980 he was nearly put out of business when Bunker Hunt tried to corner the silver market. "Things you had quoted for were escalating in price by a factor of 10," he says.

The first piece of military sil-

ver he made, he says, came about when an accountant from Newcastle visited Kendal. He was a major in the Territorial Army and wanted a piece to present to a colleague who was leaving: it was a Royal Artillery badge. This was his entrée to the military network.

Kelly made a model of a 105mm gun to be presented to the city of Newcastle. "Another time, I got a phone call and there was this Australian voice. It was a major from the Royal Australian Artillery in Townsville, Queensland. He wanted a model of one of the guns they were just receiving from the UK, and he'd seen an article in 'The Gunner'."

Then there were table centrepieces. "I did an interpreta-

tion of the Gibraltar Battery's insignia in three dimensions. That cost the battery £4,500. The biggest centrepiece on which he worked, with other craftsmen, was for the Royal Engineers. Crowned with a theodolite, it presents the history of the Ordnance Survey and contains 11kg of silver.

Now, the military is buying less, and commercial companies do not want to be seen to be splashing out. Kelly puts his annual turnover in the tens of thousands, much of it from small commissions.

"I get a lot of work from away from here. My furthest customer is in New Zealand."

A.F. Kelly, 11 Lowther Street, Kendal LA5 4DE. (Tel: 01539-724547)

Letter from Nairobi

## Was I about to be mugged?

Michela Wrong is left confused by a worrying incident in Kenya

I am still trying to work out whether I was mugged just after I had moved to Nairobi to start my job as

Africa correspondent for the Financial Times.

Fresh from anarchic Zaire, where most of society's rules appear to have been turned upside down, Kenya, with its British-style road signs and neat housing estates, seemed the epitome of civilisation. My defences down, I was easy and credulous prey for the growing ranks of con men operating in this fast-expanding capital.

I had been invited to a friend's house and was trying to map-read while driving, always a stressful experience. Coming around a corner I rolled down the window to ask a middle-aged Kenyan on the verge for directions.

He was holding an empty plastic container, which he brandished in my face, saying he had run out of fuel. Could I take him to the nearest petrol station? His hand was already on the door handle; he seemed certain I could not refuse. Confused and distracted, I let him in. My brain immediately started sending out hysterical alarm signals.

Memories of endless dinner party horror stories about Kenya's spiralling crime rate, tales of car-jackings and rape; visions of Julie Ward, blood-stained bodies, sexual atrocities. "She gave a complete stranger a lift - what did she expect?" I could imagine friends saying as they read the garish headlines.

Meanwhile my passenger was chatting away. He claimed to be a policeman, a statement he clearly assumed would reassure me. In Zaire, most crimes are committed by men in uniform. Was Kenya going to be any different, I wondered?

My heart pounding, I hit the main road and immediately spotted an Agip petrol station 100 metres away. Thank good, the ordeal was going to be a short one.

But as soon as we pulled in he was asking me for money to buy petrol. I handed over a small amount reflecting that this was the price for my stupidity. But my passenger, who, I now noticed, had alcohol on his breath, had spotted the larger notes in my wallet.

His car, he said, was a four-wheel drive and would need a lot more than this meagre contribution to get going. And how about driving him to

where it was parked? As we bickered, he kept repeating the words: "Don't worry, I have a gun."

This puzzling juxtaposition - surely he meant "Start worrying, I have a gun" or alternatively "Don't worry, I have no gun?" - so confused me I simply chose to ignore it. It was time to get out, I insisted. With petrol attendants and other customers milling around, he reluctantly complied.

No sooner had he left than I lurched for the doors and locked them, then pulled out of the petrol station. Doused in the sweat of pure relief, I was waiting for a gap in the traffic, engine revving, when there was a light tap on the window. He was back.

Cautiously, confident in the knowledge that with my foot on the accelerator and the

Relieved, I waited for a gap in the traffic when there was a tap on the window. He was back.

doors bolted I was no longer assailable. I rolled my window down an inch. "Here, take my visiting card, in case you need a policeman's help in future." Stunned, I smiled politely and waved him away before driving off.

I am sorry now I refused the card. Since that day I have learnt that the empty-petrol-can technique is one of the standard "strings" of Kenya, normally the prelude to a car-jacking or spot of extortion. Other favourites are the oil-splashed-on-wheel method, to suggest your car needs an immediate check-up, and the more direct excrement-in-a-bag approach, perfected by street children who offer, for a small fee, not to burst the contents over a smart suit.

My policeman, if policeman he was, must have been a neophyte to stage his attempt so close to a petrol station, not to press to his point, and then offer me his identification. How would his card have described him? Part-Time Mugger, perhaps?

## Living with Sellafield's nuclear mess

Continued from Page 1

Daily Mirror as "the world's nuclear dustbin".

The accusation was a dreadful shock to a management which thought it was doing a splendid job, earning valuable foreign exchange. The shock did finally lead to a policy of greater openness, largely at Bolter's instigation, though it is doubtful whether this has done more than hold public hostility in check. His book shows the reasons.

One is that Sellafield has not managed to convince people that it can operate trouble-free. Bolter recounts a shuddering succession of incidents.

The sprawling Sellafield site is littered with old buildings and waste stores. Once, Bolter and his fellow directors were visiting a pond containing 15 tonnes of nuclear fuel recovered from the 1957 fire when they noticed that one of the retaining walls had an alarming bulge. If the wall collapsed, the contamination could flood much of the site. A reinforcing wall was built, but that pond still exists, and will not be emptied until at least 2004.

On another occasion, a silo was found to have been leaking radioactive water at the rate of 100 gallons a day for nobody knew how long. Soon after, a leak of radioactive acid was discovered in a building which was thought to have been closed 21 years earlier. Those incidents date from

the 1970s. More recently, in 1983, a slick of radioactive waste was allowed to escape through the pipe which carries Sellafield's discharges a mile into the Irish Sea. That led to the closure of local beaches and a ban on eating local fish. Although everything officially returned to normal six months later, the local tourist industry is still feeling the effects.

And so it goes on. Although Bolter's compression of many incidents spanning 40 years into one book makes Sellafield sound much worse than it is, the number and severity of accidents is probably irrelevant to the public's perception of the place. And public anxiety translates inexorably into higher costs. This is the root of the nuclear industry's difficulties throughout the world, par-

ticularly in the US. For no matter how many millions are spent after each incident many people remain suspicious.

In illustration of this point, Bolter describes how a BNFL advertisement intended to show that radioactive discharges were much reduced backfired badly: far from taking this as an achievement, the public was angered to learn that Sellafield was still discharging anything at all.

Many people remain hostile because they think that much of Sellafield and the huge risks associated with it are unnecessary, particularly the newly opened Thorp plant which reprocesses fuel from later generation reactors. Thorp was started in 1976 when uranium was in short supply, and reprocessing could recover quanti-

ties of it from spent fuel - as well as the plutonium needed to sustain the cold war. The potential for foreign contracts was also large.

Today, Thorp is up and running at a cost of £2.9bn. But although Bolter fought a long and hard campaign to get it accepted, he now doubts whether it will ever be a commercial success. Uranium is now plentiful, no one wants the plutonium any more, and many of the original clients have backed off.

The potential for foreign earnings has always been cited by BNFL and the government as the clinching argument in favour of Thorp. Even if one believes the profit forecasts - and Bolter is doubtful that the contracts on which they are based are all that sound - this

line of argument has made little impact on the public. Any financial gains tend to be offset by weightier concerns over the wisdom - moral, security and otherwise - of taking in other people's nuclear waste.

As Bolter sees it, Sellafield is the centrepiece of a "Whitehall farce" covering the whole back end of the nuclear industry. Not only is Britain now committed to an expensive and probably unwanted reprocessing capability, it has also made a shambles of its plans for disposing of the resulting radioactive waste. British Energy is being privatised without final repositories for any but the most harmless forms of waste, such as workers' clothing and mildly contaminated components. The really nasty stuff - spent fuel, unwanted pluto-

nium, highly radioactive reactor parts - has nowhere to go. This means that Sellafield will, in effect, become the dump for nuclear waste by default.

As for who will pay for the safe disposal of this waste, Bolter describes the arrangements as "an organisational nightmare". Some of it will be billed to British Energy and foreign clients. But most of it will end up in the lap of the UK taxpayer. Because of this, governments will always want to push the day of reckoning further and further into the future - meaning that the waste problem will be spun out far longer than it need be. The present government has already agreed to extend the timetable for decommissioning nuclear power stations from 100 years to 135 years in order

to bring down the cost.

It is a disturbing prospect: a hugely expensive plant, part of which could become a white elephant, part a nuclear black hole.

But before rushing to condemn Sellafield, it is an inescapable fact that Britain's nuclear waste has to go somewhere, and there may be no better destination for it than Sellafield. The facility has the technology and the skills to deal with some of the most dangerous substances known to man. It lies on top of deep, granitic caverns out of which caverns could be hewn to house nuclear waste for many millennia - though this is still being investigated. In the long run, Sellafield may have to win grudging acceptance as an unpleasant but necessary service.

Inside Sellafield by Harold Bolter. Quartet Books. 299pp. £3.00

سكزا من الأصيل

سكزا من الراجل

PERSPECTIVES

# Everest and the oxygen of challenge

FT journalist Richard Cowper reports on his attempt to scale Everest in the company of actor Brian Blessed, who is making his third assault

**I** was among Britain's most unlikely climbing partners as we set off into Tibet by jeep and yak last week in an attempt to scale Mount Everest by its windswept north ridge, scene of all the great pre-war assaults on the world's highest mountain.

In the vanguard is Alan Hinkes, a brash, uncompromising, professional mountaineer at the peak of his career as an athlete, having climbed more 8,000 metres (26,200ft) Himalayan giants than any other Briton.

Teaming up with him, at 16 stone and just three months short of 60 years old, is larger-than-life actor Brian Blessed, a man obsessed by both Everest and by George Leigh Mallory, the legendary British climber who disappeared in mysterious circumstances somewhere above 27,000ft in 1924.

As a qualified guide and high altitude cameraman, Hinkes is being paid to accompany Blessed and film his quest for mountaineering stardom all the way to the top of the 8,848 metres (29,028ft) peak. But there seems little doubt that uppermost in Hinkes' mind will be his own desire to reach the summit.

"It's the highest mountain in the world, so it is important to me that I get to the top and knock it off. I don't want to have to go again," says Hinkes. His overriding ambition is to become the first Englishman to reach all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre summits, a feat so far achieved by just three climbers.

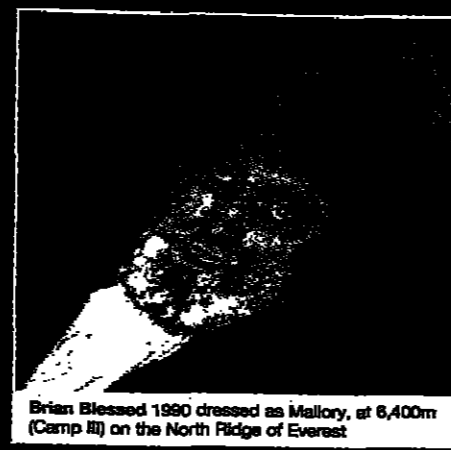
Blessed's is a more romantic approach. On his third - and possibly last - attempt on Everest, he had hoped to be carrying the remains of Captain John Noel, a friend and one of the earliest and greatest of Everest explorers, who died in 1909 aged 59. In 1913, Noel had even disguised himself as a Tibetan in order to get as close to Everest as possible.

Blessed's plan was to spread Noel's ashes close to the very spot where his even more famous colleagues, Mallory and Andrew Irvine, disappeared on the north ridge 72 years ago.

But, at the last moment, Noel's family decided the ashes should remain in England. Shrugging off his disappointment, Blessed says: "Instead, I am taking with me General Bruce's ice axe from 1937. More important, the Dalai Lama has given me three sacred scarves to place on the summit, one for the

## In the footsteps of Mallory

View from the East Rongbuk Glacier



Brian Blessed 1990 dressed as Mallory, at 6,400m (Camp II) on the North Ridge of Everest



Alan Hinkes, one of the world's most experienced Himalayan climbers

peace of mankind, one for the mountain and one for himself."

Blessed's love affair with the world's highest summit was immortalised in 1990 with *Galahad of Everest*, a BBC documentary film in which he played Mallory. In spite of

his age and weight, hallucinating and sometimes barely able to stay upright, Blessed nevertheless contrived to reach 25,400ft on his first attempt, a feat that astonished his mountaineering colleagues.

One colleague who has followed

his career closely says: "Brian started six years ago by playing a part. Now, neither he nor we can tell where the acting ends and reality begins."

Blessed's flare for the dramatic reached its height during his second

attempt on Everest in autumn 1993 when he followed the "yak route", the non-traditional way to the top of the mountain on the south side, used by Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing in 1953.

At 2am on the morning of the

final attempt of the summit from camp IV, just under 8,000 metres on the south col, Blessed shocked his three colleagues by announcing, without warning, that he was not going to use oxygen. He told his personal guide, Martin Barnicoat,

that it was not sporting. Besides which, the ungainly mask would get in the way of his relationship with the environment on the climb.

It was a crucial decision. Of the 748 individual ascents of Everest to date, more than 90 per cent have relied on bottled oxygen to compensate for the increasing lack of it as you go higher. This lack leads to difficulty in carrying out any physical activity, or thinking straight. Indeed, life above 7,000 metres is so debilitating that climbers know it as the "death zone".

Barnicoat and the two other members of the team went on to reach the summit that day in perfect weather. But Blessed, left alone and unable to start until the sun rose because of the immense cold, hardly managed to get much above Camp IV. Yet it was a decision admired by those climbers who are more concerned with climbing the big peaks in style rather than simply getting to the top at all costs.

Whether oxygen will be used this time is uncertain. Blessed is said to have given Barnicoat, his guide once again, a "categorical assurance" that he will. But, when quizzed on the matter before leaving, he was non-committal.

"Yes, there is great pressure on me to get to the top," he said. "I get 7,000 letters a week, and then there is all the money I am raising for hospitals and other charities. True, I struggle up to 21,000ft. But, somehow, I seem to break free at 23,000, and last time I felt good at over 8,000 metres (26,200ft). I have never used oxygen yet."

Steve Bell of Himalayan Kingdoms, the man who has organised the expedition, is in no doubt. "If he elects not to use oxygen, he will not get to the top. It is as simple as that. Only a few top-performing mountaineering athletes - Alan Hinkes is one of them - are capable of such a feat. The rest of us have to accept our mortal limitations."

But I cannot help sympathising with Brian Blessed. In all the climbs I have made, I have never used oxygen and neither have my climbing friends. But the temptation for me to use it on this trip will be great. Faced with the stark choice of "conquering" Everest with oxygen or "failing" without, I cannot be sure that I will be honourable and brave enough to take the ethical route.

The expedition is being supported by Himalayan Kingdoms, North Face, Berghaus, Bollé, Snow + Rock, Lufthansa and Kodak.

Illustration by Brana Radovic

**Y**ou may be vaguely familiar with the television habits of the Japanese. One of the country's more richly deserved international reputations is for the weird awfulness of its broadcasting. Stilted samurai drama competes for the attention of 120m eager viewers with grotesque game shows that involve the contestants either taking off their clothes or enduring feats of physical torture beyond even the wildest imaginings of Quentin Tarantino.

As with all stereotypes, this image is incomplete, of course. Knuckle-grawling beauty contests are only a part of Japanese television schadenfreude. Among the livelier strains that now fill the longueurs between this so-called entertainment is the investigative documentary.

Matters of public interest of varying degrees of triviality are exposed in a genre dimly recognisable as US current-affairs-tabletoid-chic. Intrepid, handsome reporters chase reluctant interviewees down dark streets, and the hand-held camera wobbles convincingly in pursuit.

A few programmes actually manage to break through the gossip column agenda to tackle serious questions: they uncover adminis-

trative abuses and corporate corruption in between the sex lives of the rich and famous.

It is perhaps ironic then, that one such programme has done more damage to the reputation of Japanese television than any number of tasteless game shows. It has dominated parliamentary debate for a week, assiduously earning the obloquy of the prime minister and prompting calls for a public inquiry into the ethics of television broadcasters.

Its notoriety is especially remarkable since the programme has not even been broadcast.

In the autumn of 1989, current affairs producers at Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS), Japan's largest commercial television company, began researching material for a documentary about the now infamous Aum Shinrikyo, the pseudo-religious sect alleged to have been responsible for last year's poisoned gas attack on the Tokyo subway.

In an unwonted but prescient

piece of investigative journalism, they discovered some unsettling information about what had hitherto been regarded as a bona fide, if somewhat strange, religious sect, led by the levitating and bearded mystic, Shoko Asahara. Aum's god, it seemed, was a jealous god, requiring complete devotion from his members, usually forcing them to hand over their worldly goods, and cutting up rough when they tried to leave.

The principal source of much of this subsequently confirmed information was an interview taped by the producers with a lawyer, Tsunsumi Sakamoto, who had himself been investigating these claims of abuse and was only too pleased to get his research into the public domain.

The interview was scheduled to be broadcast in November 1989, but at the end of October the producers received an urgent call from Aum. Members had got to hear of the interview and warned the company

that it might be libellous. They demanded to see it.

Instead of doing what even the most craven of reporters would do and telling them to get lost, the programme-makers actually invited the Aum members in to see the tape. Three heavies from the sect duly trooped into the studios of TBS and received a private showing.

**H**aving seen themselves denounced by the convincing Sakamoto, the Aum members repeated their warning to TBS not to broadcast the interview. The company obliged - the interview was never broadcast. A few days later Sakamoto, his wife and their one-year-old son disappeared. Their bodies were found last September, six years later.

The company's behaviour at the time and subsequently is now a source of national shame. On no occasion did TBS ever

attempt to give information about the interview to police investigating the disappearance of the Sakamoto family. As revelations began to pile up over the next six years about the activities of Aum, the company still kept silent. Even after the Tokyo subway attack last year, it said nothing. It was only when one of the Aum conspirators arrested for the attack told police about the interview and the subsequent murder of Sakamoto, that the news emerged.

Even then, TBS denied any knowledge of the interview and its subsequent shelving. Eventually last week, under intense political and public pressure, the company owned up and acknowledged that its producers had been involved.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that Japan's leading commercial television company was not only an accessory to the murder of Sakamoto, but quite possibly to the murders of 12 victims of the gas attack last year. If TBS had broad-

cast its interview, it would almost certainly have alerted the public to the dangers posed by Aum. Even if, at any point in the last six years, it had made known what its producers had discovered, it might have averted the tragedies that occurred. Yet the company kept its counsel.

Why? There are some allegations that TBS counts a number of Aum members among its employees. But then why make the programme? It is also claimed, though denied by the company, that the producers hoped to trade the non-airing of their programme for a subsequent interview with Asahara himself.

Whatever the reason for the extraordinary decision to comply with Aum's demands it would not explain the company's six-year failure to reveal what it knew until much too late.

The likeliest explanation for this failure is a simple, but tragic fact of Japanese corporate life. Nobody at the company could bring themselves to admit the error. To do so

would be to besmirch its reputation, to force it to "lose face" and, of course, to risk disrupting the harmony that is so essential to the operation of Japanese companies.

Obsessive loyalty to the company combined with the customary Japanese fear of being seen to act alone prevented everyone concerned from speaking out.

That same sense of obligation has prevented countless others from questioning their employers' methods. This year alone, years after the events, revelations have just begun to emerge about cover-ups of HIV-infected blood for haemophiliacs, leaks at nuclear reactors, and banks' relations with organised criminals.

Japanese employees are taught to treat their company with the respect they accord their families. Much more regard their obligations much more seriously than that. For them, the company is the family.

Every year, dozens demonstrate their commitment by working themselves to death in their company's service. It is still considered by some an almost heroic sacrifice. But when the same obsessive devotion leads directly to the deaths of innocent parties, it must be time for Japan's devoted employees to rethink their priorities.

## Letter from Tokyo / Gerard Baker

# Why Japan needs whistle-blowers

## Culloden revisited

**T**he last set battle in Britain took place 250 years ago next Tuesday when George II's army under the Duke of Cumberland routed the Jacobite forces of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie", at Culloden, near Inverness, Scotland.

At that battlefield on April 16, the National Trust for Scotland opens a fascinating exhibition called *The Swords and the Sorrows*. It is open from 9am to 6pm every day until September 20, the day Charles Edward left Scotland. For, although the battle was over in an hour, Charles Edward took to the heather, eventually leaving Scotland in a French ship five months later.

Lining up at Culloden were well-fed Redcoats with muskets and cannon, on the other the ill-fed and tired Highlanders in their tartans, with their Irish and French allies. The boggy ground, crossed by dykes, was hopeless for the Highlanders, used to making terrifying sword-charges which had won them earlier battles in the '45 uprising.

The killing carried on all of that day, and the following. While Charles Edward was hunted from glen to glen, the Hanoverians exacted horrible

reprisals. Murder, torture, rape and pillage were the rule. The Highlanders' cattle, sheep and horses were driven south in huge numbers.

The London government set out to destroy a way of life. The plaid (which kept the Highlanders warm) and kilt were forbidden, and weapons were to be handed in. The clan chiefs' authority was removed in an act of 1747. The next blow was the "Clearances" - the widespread evictions in the Highlands and Islands between 1785 and 1850 in the name of more profitable agriculture.

The '45 will always be a poignant story. Charles Edward landed on the west coast (in August 1745) with a few men to reclaim the thrones of Scotland, England and Ireland for the Stuarts and rally the Highland chiefs. By September he had taken Edinburgh, and the Highland charge destroyed the Hanoverian army at the nearby battle of Prestonpans.

Charles Edward turned south eager to maintain the momentum of his attack. His speed terrified London, triggering a run on the Bank of England. On December 4 the Jacobites entered Derby.

Charles Edward wanted to press on to London. He might have done well but he had

invaded England too early, without the support of the English Jacobites and before the French could invade. But the Jacobite council voted to retreat to Scotland, removing the most dangerous threat to Britain in the 18th century.

The French sent an Irish and French force to Scotland. Could it have been different? Only if the French had helped Charles Edward continuously and on a large scale. But the French were more concerned to extend their land frontier eastwards into the Low Countries than to overthrow the Hanoverians. Like Bosnia, the '45 took place under the shadow of big international players, but remained a local drama of tribal, religious and dynastic loyalties.

This summer's exhibition includes Jacobite weapons and equipment dropped on the field or hidden after the battle. Of Charles Edward's are a sporting gun, bonnet, campaign kettle, medicine chest and blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter. The best pieces are probably also his - a fine sword and a leather targe (Highland shield) in silver.

Visitor Centre, tel 01463-739807

Gerald Cadogan

**T**he *Matthew* is an authentic replica of the small sailing ship in which John Cabot became the first European to visit North America, in the summer of 1497.

It has taken two years to build, using entirely traditional methods, at a public slipway in Bristol and will be the centrepiece of that city's Festival of the Sea from May 24-27.

Next summer the *Matthew* is to cross the north Atlantic in a re-enactment of the voyage which took Cabot to Newfoundland and down the eastern seaboard to Boston.

Last week it made its maiden voyage - a shake-out cruise up the English Channel.

Designer Colin Muddie has created numerous square-riggers in the past two decades, mostly as training vessels. He is also the driving force behind the proposal that the Royal Yacht Britannia should be replaced with a handsome sailing ship the size of the *Cutty Sark*.

However, the *Matthew* represented a dual challenge for Muddie. It had to be as historically accurate as possible yet the sources he had to work from were minimal. There were no ship's drawings lodged at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. Cabot's shipwrights had worked by eye and folklore. So Muddie took as his starting point drawings, found in churches and private

## In Cabot's wake

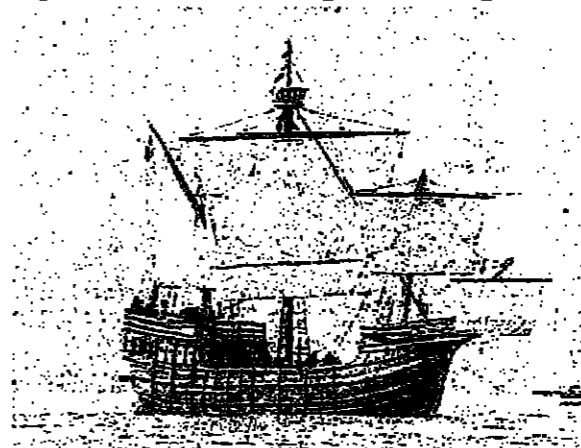
Keith Wheatley sets sail in a replica barque

houses, of ships from the same period.

The *Matthew* represents a considerable challenge for the modern seaman more accustomed to Kevlar and carbon fibre than manila and canvas. The skipper controls the ship from the poop deck, a long, loud shout away from the helmsman down below. David Alan-Williams, known as a racing sailor and yacht designer until now, is the skipper. He was part of the victorious New Zealand team that won the America's Cup in San Diego last year - though at the drawing board, not the helm.

"The first offshore race I ever took part in was the Fastnet and the second was the Whitbread Race, so there's nothing like a steep learning curve," says Alan-Williams. "It's the same with being both a sailor and a designer. There aren't many people who do both but in the early days of yachting it was commonplace."

*Matthew* is technically a "navicula" - better known in Tudor times as a barque. This type of small cargo ship, with a high fore'sle and poop deck, was found all over the Mediterranean then and would have been familiar to the Italian-



The *Matthew*, centrepiece of Bristol's Festival of the Sea

born Cabot from his earliest days at sea. With all four sails set, the new *Matthew* manages just about four knots an hour when the wind is blowing. But since Cabot averaged barely 40 miles a day, it should be able to keep to that fairly comfortably.

In its day it would have been known as a "50-tunner", a measurement derived from the number of barrels, or tuns, of wine she was capable of bringing from the sunny lands of the south to the famous Bristol

wine and sherry merchants. At 50ft overall, 68ft on deck with a 30ft beam, the *Matthew* feels a little "square" to anyone accustomed to the narrower style of a modern sailing vessel. Underwater she draws just six feet and her rounded hull makes her both roll and steer unpredictably.

The giant tiller is a solid piece of oak nearly 12ft long, massive in cross-section, and weighing around 400lb. When a wave catches the rudder, the tiller has a kick like a mule

and while I was steering up Channel I gave a blow in the ribs I will not forget in a hurry.

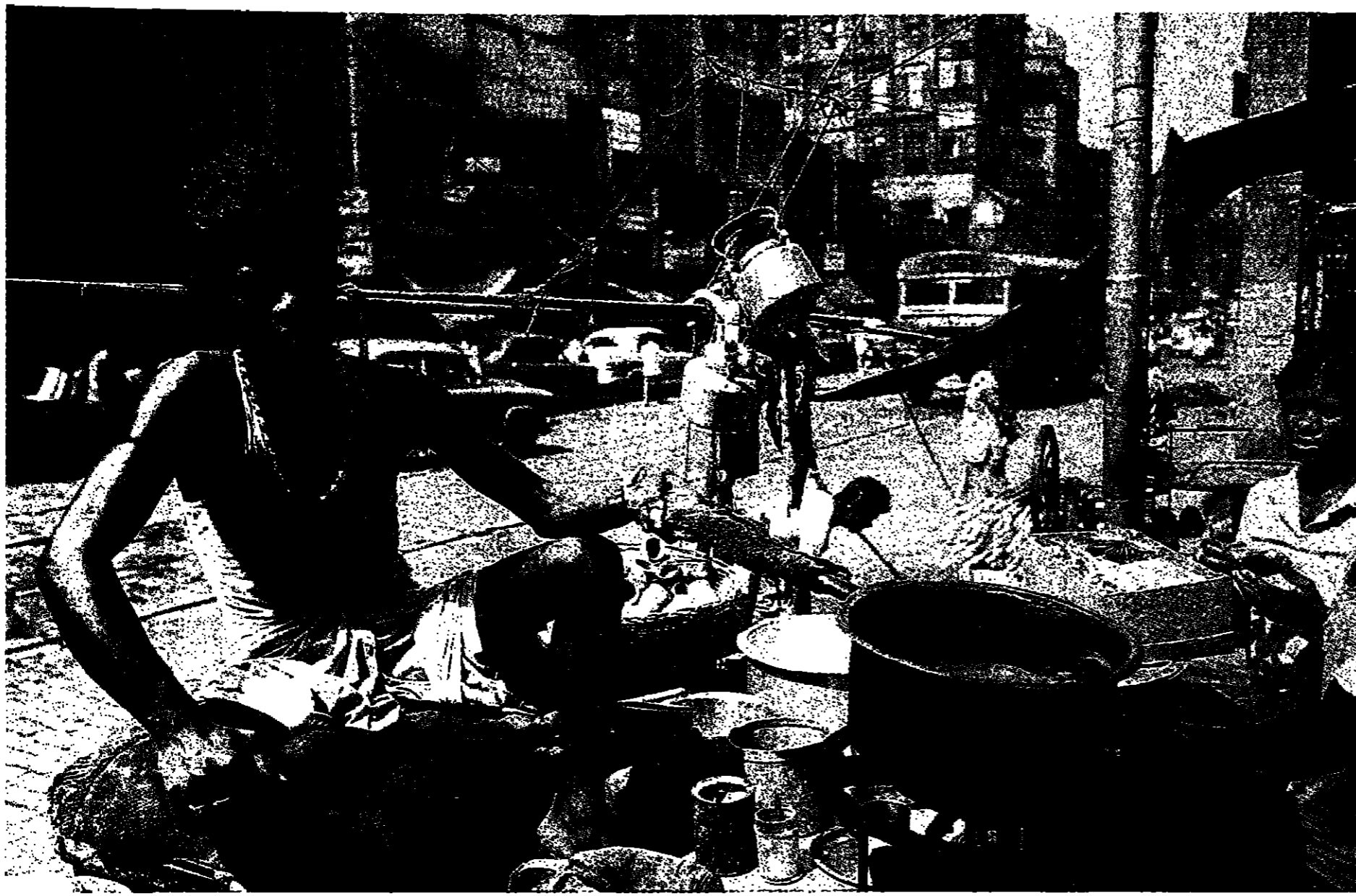
Patience and skill are the two commodities most in demand when learning to sail a vessel like the *Matthew*. Strength comes in handy as well, since every rope tends to carry a significant load and winches are non-existent, with the exception of the capstan windlasses. The main yard and sail alone weigh half-a-ton. Hoisting it just 30ft to its sailing position just below the crew's nest is a 10-man job.

John Cabot sailed the north Atlantic with just 19 aboard his newly built barque. "Modern sailors think they're pretty clever but those guys five centuries ago were much smarter," says Neil Batt, mate on the *Matthew*'s maiden voyage from Bristol to London.

Batt knows what he is talking about, since his regular job is skippering the racing maxi yacht *Longboard*. "It's hard work - there are so many ropes," he says. Batt's involvement came about because Longboard's owner, the well-known British yachtsman Mike Slade, is also head of Helical Bar, the London-based property company that has underwritten the \$1.5m cost of building this piece of floating history.

The *Matthew* can be seen in London at City Pier, next to Tower Bridge, until April 18.

FOOD AND DRINK



A city morning cuppa: hot tea with milk on the streets of Calcutta

Photo: Photos

Breakfasts

Starting the day with chapattis

George Dorgan begins an occasional series with a look at what London's Asian community offers

My first "Indian" breakfast was in Sylhet in northern Bangladesh, across the border with Assam, and it was not just the strong, local tea that was an eye-opener.

Over the years, I have tried a lot of sub-continental cuisines, but Indian breakfast was terra incognita, a new world to explore.

As first experiences go, this one was special. After all, not every visiting journalist gets invited to the district governor's Raj-period bungalow for breakfast, but the fact that I was in a party which included a visiting MP probably helped.

There were about a dozen of us breakfasting on chapattis and a lightly spiced mutton curry, *pooris*, *dhal*, a kind of cabbage cooked in ghee and a variety of sweets - Bangladeshis share a sweet tooth with the Moslem-influenced part of northern India stretching across to Pakistan.

It is not easy to find Indian restaurants in the UK that serve breakfast, but it is worth the effort to search them out. Restaurants in the heart of Indian communities do breakfast dishes at the weekends; and the south Indian vegetarian restaurants will serve traditional breakfast items for lunch and dinner.

Namita Panjabi is director of cuisine at Chutney Mary's in King's Road, London SW10, and is one of the public faces of Indian cooking in England.

She says that Indian breakfasts are basically brunches: "People don't get up at 7am and leave for work. The whole business community starts much later, at 11am, so a substantial

breakfast is your main daytime meal and is eaten at 10.30am."

Indian breakfast dishes would make a wonderful weekend brunch. There are probably thousands of breakfast dishes, reflecting the range of local produce across the sub-continent.

South India concentrates on rice products and *dhal* and, by common consent among chefs, has had the greatest influence; dishes from the south are served at breakfast all over India. North India will have wheat and either a vegetable or something sweet. Very few pockets - like the Parsis (who are Zoroastrians) or Goans (many of whom are Christians) or the Moslems - will have non-vegetarian items for breakfast.

Henry Lobo, chef at Veeraswamy, in Regent Street, London, is from Goa but when he thinks of breakfast he thinks of the infinite variety of south Indian dishes.

Some, like *masala dosa*, a crispy rice and lentil flour pancake stuffed with spicy potato and *utappam*, a sort of pizza made from white lentil dough topped with chopped onion, tomato, coriander and chillies, are regularly served in south Indian vegetarian restaurants. So are *idlis*, steamed rice flour cakes served with *sambhar*, a vegetable broth of *dhal*, aubergines, and okra flavoured with *asafoetida*; served with green coconut chutney.

You would have to look far and wide to find *dahi vada* - deep-fried doughnuts of fermented lentil dough, flavoured with onions, coriander, green chilli, soaked in slightly sweetened yoghurt. *Masala poha*, from the west Indian state of Maharashtra, is a mix of flaked rice and diced potato with mustard and cumin

seeds, curry leaves, onion, turmeric, chopped tomatoes and coriander.

I find myself craving *upma*, a humble cross between porridge and cous-cous, made from pan-roasted semolina, flavoured with mustard seeds, *urid dhal*, curry leaves, cashews, chopped onion and coriander.

Fans of Indian cuisine working in the City of London will probably be familiar with Cyrus Todiwala, the chef/proprietor of Café Spice Namaste. In the past few years his exciting cooking has attracted a loyal following. He is now in partnership with Michael Gottlieb (owner of Smolensky's) and in premises that are as lively as his cooking.

Todiwala made the best egg dish I have ever tasted, called *akhori*. This is soft - almost runny - scrambled eggs with a base of long-cooked onions, ginger, garlic, green chillies and flavoured with tomato, coriander, lemon juice, sultanas and sugar.

I thought his *upma* was perfect as he adds ginger, garlic and green chillies. He also prepared a spicier version of *idlis* from Kerala called *vava idli*, made from semolina and yeast with tomatoes, green chillies, ginger and curry leaves to flavour the steamed cakes.

Todiwala is a Parsi and they often have meat or fish for breakfast, frequently using offal and less popular fishes. He makes fried kidneys and liver, which are first rubbed and left to stand with tandoori spices - coriander, cumin, turmeric, ginger, garlic and red chillies.

The same method is used with grey

mullet, devil fish and other cuts of offal such as the spleen. Enam Ali is chef/proprietor of Le Raj in Epsom, Surrey, and one of the founders of the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs. The spiced tea he prepared recently for the British Tea Council is a traditional breakfast drink - made with Sylheti tea, which is strong, dark and astringent, boiled with cinnamon, cardamom, milk and sugar.

We shared some traditional Bangladeshi breakfast dishes as the sun was sinking over Epsom Downs, including *dim bhaji* - a spicy omelette made with onion and hot red and green chillies, flat folded like an envelope. It can be eaten with *chapatti* or *paratha*, and the dish reflects the Anglo influence in Indian cooking.

The Bangladeshi sweet tooth showed in dishes like *sara*, a moderately sweet homemade cheese flavoured with rose water, served with *kanun* fruit (like passion fruit) and sugar cane sprinkled on top. Ali also prepared *sufi halwa*, a sweet small cake made with very fine-grained semolina, cooked in water and milk, with cinnamon, cardamom and ghee.

I tried two extraordinary Pakistani dishes made by A.W. Qureshi, chef/proprietor at Machaan on King's Road, Chelsea. Halim is a fabulously rich, fragrant stew/broth/porridge of mutton, lentils and spices slowly cooked for six or seven hours, served with green chillies, ginger and well-browned onions and is a pre-taste of paradise. *Nehari* is an even longer cooked mutton shank stew that just falls off the bone and is served with *naan* bread. Very rich, loaded with calories and worth starving yourself for. Both can be found on Sunday

mornings in restaurants in Pakistani communities.

Nareesh Mata, chef at the Red Fort in Soho, is from Delhi and along with familiar *pooris* (wholewheat bread that puffs up in frying) served with spicy potatoes, he also makes *paratha* - like a *poori* made from refined white flour with yoghurt and ground semolina - and this is served with *chole*, spicy chick peas, Tamarind sauce or tamarind and date chutney usually go with it.

*Sufi halwa* is also popular around Delhi and Mata makes his loose, like a sweet porridge, with sultanas and cashews. *Parathas* are popular for breakfast, filled with potato, green chillies, coriander and ground pomegranate seeds.

Mehernosh Mody is also a Parsi and is chef at London's first Franco-Indian restaurant, La Porte des Indes, a luxurious 350-seater at Marble Arch which is run by the group behind The Blue Elephant at Fulham Broadway.

He offered another version of *akhori* made from boiled - instead of scrambled - eggs. Onions, green chillies and ginger are cooked with tomatoes, adding the chopped egg whites, chopped coriander and gently stirring in the whole, boiled yolk at the end.

And a popular breakfast snack sold by street vendors in Bombay is made with a spicy mashed potato mix seasoned with coriander, green chillies, onions, turmeric and red chilli powder, spread on sliced white bread, dipped in gram flour batter and deep fried.

All ingredients can be obtained from Indian shops or by post from: The Curry Club, PO Box 7, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1EP. Tel: 01428-653227.

Shopping  
Great lady revisited

Giles MacDonogh on a top traiteur

About 15 Christmas ago, long before there was any whiff of *glasnost* in the air, the French press copied a story from their Soviet counterparts. Pravda or Ivestia, or one of the even less respectable papers of the day, had published a glowing article about food queues in Paris. It was emblazoned with a picture of the place de la Madeleine and a long line of elegant *parisiennes* in mink coats armed with shopping baskets. "You see," the caption allegedly ran, "it happens even in France."

There is no reason to believe that the picture was a fake. At Christmas time it is not unusual to see long queues outside the city's best traiteurs, as well-heeled families stock up on their *foie gras*, *boudins blancs truffés*, smoked salmon, caviar and other luxuries for the festive season. One shop I know, the minuscule Coesmon in the rue Dauphine, is even considerate enough to take little *piéts chauds* out to the waiting hordes.

In the place de la Madeleine are Paris's two most famous traiteurs: Hédiard and Fauchon. The latter was founded by Anguste Fauchon in 1868. Fauchon was a humble Norman who began to ply his trade from a glorified barrow on the place de la Madeleine.

With time the barrow gave way to a lean-to on the corner of the place and the rue Vignon, where Fauchon's main building still stands. Then the temporary structure turned into the building we know today, and Fauchon had added a wine shop, saloon for afternoon tea and pâtisseries to the original conception.

By 1910 Fauchon had taken over five houses in and around the place de la Madeleine. A catalogue published about that time makes interesting reading. For example, there were rather more English products on display than one might have imagined: plum pudding, Humbley and Palmer's Blackwell, Grosse (sic) and Blackwell's, Colman's mustard and Reading Sauce. There was also Jameson Whiskey from Dublin and Dewar's whiskey from Scotland.

There was plenty of Russian caviar but French products naturally dominated the range: sugared almonds for christenings, *marrons glacés*, Madeleines from Commercy as favoured by Proust, fruit compotes, asparagus from the Paris suburb of Argenteuil, truffles, *foie gras*, *pâté en croûte* extra virgin olive oil from Nice and Houdan chickens (which fetched a higher price than those from Bresse).

River fish were rather more valued then, with gudgeon and perch selling for the same amount as salmon. The wine list surprises, not only by the place accorded to top German wines but also because Saint Emillion and Pomerol often achieved better prices than Médoc. The 1899 Petrus was 25 centimes more expensive than the 1904 LaFite. The most expensive wine of all was the 1874 Chateau Mondot-Troisong (sic) from Saint Emillion.

As is so often the case, Fauchon's children lacked the acumen of their father. After his death in 1938 the business slumped. In 1952 his heirs sold out to Joseph Filoosoff who pumped new life into the shop by negating the seasons, and confounding the Parisians with offers of cherries and strawberries at Christmas-time: the result of his close links with Air France.

Today Fauchon is run by Filoosoff's granddaughter, Martine Fremat. My own experience of Fauchon goes back to a leaner youth. Like every other struggling man or woman in Paris I had my nose pressed up against the windows in the place de la Madeleine, staring at the extraordinary *canards aux fruits*: whole ducks decked with slices and pieces of fruit; or the piles of *boudins* stuffed with every imaginable delicacy; the terrines and the *pâtés* and the fabulous workmanship of the *pâtisseries*. I rack my brains, but I cannot recall a single occasion when I went in.

That was before Martine Fremat's time. She took over in 1986 and one of her first objectives was to democratise the *Grande Dame de la Madeleine*. Gift ideas were remodelled to bring them within the reach of the average Frenchman. Fauchon counters were established in 500 French supermarkets with a limited range of their most famous products: moustards, jams and biscuits.

Fremat introduced another concept to Fauchon. In the 1920s the shop had a luncheon room. She decided to recreate it and put other restaurants and eating places into spare corners, so that now you can eat caviar, oysters, or an Italian meal in the trattoria after picking up your shopping. The traiteur continues to provide ready-made food of superb quality.

The new star attraction is the restaurant "le 30" which is open for lunch and dinner. Here the chef, Bruno Deligne, produces dishes of the highest standard, such as an escalope of fresh *foie gras* with preserved apricots, or an ox cheek roasted for six hours. The cakes are brought up from Fauchon's famous pâtisseries, Pierre Hermé.

In contrast, downstairs there is a cafeteria which claims to sell the cheapest espresso in Paris, and where excellent sandwiches, salads and grills may be had. If not for a pitance of fresh *foie gras* with preserved apricots, or an ox cheek roasted for six hours. The cakes are brought up from Fauchon's famous pâtisseries, Pierre Hermé.

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As is so often the case, Fauchon's children lacked the acumen of their father. After his death in 1938 the business slumped. In 1952 his heirs sold out to Joseph Filoosoff who pumped new life into the shop by negating the seasons, and confounding the Parisians with offers of cherries and strawberries at Christmas-time: the result of his close links with Air France.

Today Fauchon is run by Filoosoff's granddaughter, Martine Fremat. My own experience of Fauchon goes back to a leaner youth. Like every other struggling man or woman in Paris I had my nose pressed up against the windows in the place de la Madeleine, staring at the extraordinary *canards aux fruits*: whole ducks decked with slices and pieces of fruit; or the piles of *boudins* stuffed with every imaginable delicacy; the terrines and the *pâtés* and the fabulous workmanship of the *pâtisseries*. I rack my brains, but I cannot recall a single occasion when I went in.

That was before Martine Fremat's time. She took over in 1986 and one of her first objectives was to democratise the *Grande Dame de la Madeleine*. Gift ideas were remodelled to bring them within the reach of the average Frenchman. Fauchon counters were established in 500 French supermarkets with a limited range of their most famous products: moustards, jams and biscuits.

British Summertime signals the start of the salad season. Well, that is the theory. In practice, snowflakes are fluttering past the window as I write. It is a half-hearted effort, just a few flakes, like the tired tail-end of a pillow-fight, but the temperature is too close to zero to think in terms of eating crisply chilled foods.

The Little Gem lettuces I bought in a moment of optimistic enthusiasm will have to be cooked. Never mind, they are almost better hot than cold, and more unusual served that way.

Sometimes I braise them whole with nuggets of butter and a splash each of vermouth and chicken stock. Sometimes I split them and stuff them before braising. But when time is short I quarter them or shred them and cook them on top of the stove, as described below.

The only trouble is that you

need larger quantities of lettuce for cooking than for making salads, and as Beatrix Potter pointed out in *Peter Rabbit*, eating a lot of lettuce can have a soporific effect. This is not the season for slipping into hibernation, so it may be wise to allow a few days in between cooking these recipes.

**PRAWNS WITH LETTUCE AND COCONUT CREAM**  
(serves 4)

The phrase "Mad tiger prawns" may raise a few eyebrows but fear not. It does not refer to some sinister newly discovered disease in crustaceans; it is merely the abbreviation used by the fish counters of some supermarkets to identify tiger prawns from Madagascar waters. Ready shelled and raw,

they can be bought defrosted or still frozen, a useful ingredient for quick midweek meals.

The flavour and texture of these warm water prawns lack the full sweetness of those from cold northern waters, but I find them very acceptable when cooked with flavoursome ingredients as here.

250-300g raw peeled prawns; 4-6 Little Gem lettuces (enough to yield 400-500g after trimming away roots and coarse outer leaves); 1 tablespoon or so very finely chopped green ginger; 1 finely chopped garlic clove; 2 tablespoons chopped green coriander; the finely grated zest of 1 lime; 100ml coconut cream; 20g unsalted butter plus 1 tablespoon olive oil.

Chop the ginger, garlic and coriander. Shred the lettuces. Put the ginger and garlic into a large sauté pan together with the butter and olive oil and place over low heat until hot and aromatic.

Meanwhile, simmer the coconut cream in a small pan for a few minutes to reduce it a little.

Add the lettuce to the sauté pan and toss till every shred glistens with fat. Then cook over moderate heat for six minutes or so, stirring and turning the leaves as necessary, to drive off their moisture, reduce them in bulk and thoroughly heat them through yet retain slight crunch.

Cook the prawns simultaneously. Drop them into the simmering coconut cream, push them down into the liquid as much as possible and cook fairly gently, stirring as necessary, until the flesh has turned pink.

Season the cooked lettuces with salt, pepper, lime zest and green coriander. Gently but thoroughly mix in the prawns in coconut cream - never mind if the cream begins to look a little curdled - and serve straight away with plain boiled basmati rice.

**DUCK WITH GINGER, LETTUCE AND PEAS**

a couple of tablespoons of fat from the pan. Stir in the spring onions and ginger. After a couple of minutes add the lettuce. Toss it to coat it with fat and cook fairly gently for 6 minutes or so, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid is driven off, the lettuce is hot and cooked through yet retains a little bite.

While the lettuce cooks, boil the peas (if the peas are fresh and somewhat starchy, it may be necessary to start cooking them earlier).

Add the cooked and drained peas to the lettuce. Season with soy sauce, black pepper and a discrete sprinkling of mint. Carve the duck, lay the slices over the vegetables and pour on the juices that have collected on the carving plate. Garnish with a jaunty sprig of mint and serve with new potatoes or Chinese noodles.

(serves 4)

Duck with green peas is a traditional British spring dish, widely duck with ginger, spring onions and soy is an oriental favourite. The two combinations marry well.

Spring is so late this year that frozen peas are the only practical choice as yet. Use garden peas, not petits pois, and be sure they are plain ones, not the poor things that have been impregnated with an overdose of menthol. Like those "cool" as a mountain stream" Consulate cigarettes of 30-30 years ago.

400g boned-out duck breasts; 350-400g shredded Little Gem lettuce; 150-200g shelled peas; 6-8 spring onions; 1 slightly heaped tablespoon finely chopped green ginger; a few sprigs of mint; a few shakes of soy sauce.

Heat a large, heavy duty non-stick sauté pan. Lay the duck in it, skin-side down, and immediately reduce the heat. Cook fairly gently until tender and slightly pink, about 12 minutes (or until done to your liking). Turn the duck occasionally but leave it skin side down for most of the time to avoid toughening the flesh.

Put the cooked duck to rest in a low oven, and pour all but

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A new season of cookery demonstrations is about to begin at Divertiment in Fulham Road, London SW3 (tel: 0171-681 8066 for bookings). First off on Tuesday is Susanna Gelmetti, who will be cooking from her charmingly illustrated *Italian Country Cooking* (Rosenfeld, £14.99).

On April 30 Lyn Hall will demonstrate the art of sausage-making. May 14 brings ice-cream supremo Robin Weir and May 28 is

baker Linda Collister's turn. ■ A suggestion that Borodinsky sourdough rye bread is suitable for coeliacs (Weekend FT, March 9). This loaf is, alas, not made with gluten-free flour and is therefore unsuitable for coeliacs.

What I should have said is that the gluten in rye flour is different from that in wheat, and many who are intolerant to wheat may be able to eat rye flour products.

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FASHION

# Working wear in New York

After all the fripperies in Europe, at last here are desirable clothes, says Marion Hume



## The X factor that appeals

What is it about American designers that British women love so much - the certain something that sets the likes of Calvin Klein and Donna Karan apart from the international fashion hurry-burry?

Well, according to Harvey Nichols, a store that offers the full gamut of sartorial possibilities, the X factor is ease. In a world of acid bright, printed hipsters and fluffy midriff-baring skinny knits, US design is the voice of reason. "These are clothes for the sophisticated woman who wears what she likes and likes what she wears," says Nick Walker, one of the store's buying team. "She has found what she wants from fashion - she knows what suits her. She will not follow just any trend."

Speaking of the store's Big Four names - Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan and Michael Kors - Walker describes stateside style as refined and clean, using exquisite fabrics and great colours.

In particular, he highlights Michael Kors as the name to watch. Already selling exceptionally well this spring, his fresh, understated clothes will become available to an even wider audience when his diffusion collection is introduced next autumn.

"We believe in Kors very strongly," explains Walker. "He's massive in America and we feel that his name could become almost as important for us as Ralph Lauren."

Belinda Morris

□ Above: fine silk grosgrain pull-on jacket, £570, and slim, flat-fronted fine silk grosgrain trousers, £340, both by Michael Kors at Harvey Nichols (tel: 0171 235-5000)

There used to be a tremendous feeling of relief when the international fashion caravan pulled into New York City.

After the experiments of London, the froon froon of Paris, the endless beige that once characterised Milanese-style fashion, New York guaranteed well-designed clothes for working women who also had weekends, and, occasionally, for trophy wives and movie stars.

Every outfit on the New York runways had a purpose. Every outfit could be imagined on a body that was not that of a supermodel.

Now the New York fashion schedule has grown. More and more designers based in New York are becoming well known abroad: Isaac Mizrahi (designer and star of the movie *Unzipped*), Todd Oldham (who has his own line but also designs for Escada), Marc Jacobs (whose downtown aesthetic manages to transfer well to London) and Anna Sui, whose best friend is the million-dollar photographer, Steven Meisel, which always ensures her publicity.

The New York shows have expanded from showroom presentations to huge performances in tents. But the downside is the arrival of "catwalk clothes" - those designed for the big canvas of the fashion show and which can have no life beyond it.

Of course, fashion shows anywhere produce some clothes that no one in their right mind would covet. The worst in the US this season were at Anna Sui. Who today would want to look like Dora Carrington or Lady Ottoline Morrell is a mystery to me. But Anna Sui - who has obviously seen the Emma Thompson film a few more times than is good for her - seemed to think that droopy, floppy dresses and lanky jackets made even models appear barrel-chested might find favour.

Happily, clothes from America's "Big Three" - Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan - that will arrive in stores in six months' time were more desirable. Both Lauren and Karan headed back to the intimacy of their showrooms, away from the brouhaha of a big show venue which has helped neither of them recently.

They showed real clothes and each came up with their strongest collection in seasons. Meanwhile, Calvin Klein stayed with a big show in a big tent, but sent out no outfit that was not meant to have a life beyond the flash-bulbs and the supermodel bodies. Lauren, Klein and Karan have three of the most successful labels on earth and when they stick to what they do best it is not hard to see why. In recent seasons, Donna Karan (who numbers Barbra Streisand among her friends) has gone a little too "breadway" in her tastes. Skirts have been too big for off-stage lives and shapes too overblown for the street-to-office-to-taxi-to-dinner lives that her wealthy working women customers experience.

Thankfully, for next autumn, fans will find her back on target, with her body-supporting wool double crepe stretch untrousers and her slender suede jackets and cashmere turtle necks.

When the model, Shalom, appeared towards the end of Karan's show with what looked like lumps of coal strung across her brow, you knew the designer was not going to miss a beat. The devout cutaway velvet evening dresses that followed were perhaps a little too revealing for most Karan devotees. But the simplicity of a black cashmere wrap sweater and viscose satin evening skirt should more than compensate.

It will also be worth waiting six months for Karan's mac-length bitter chocolate suede wrap coat and her slinky navy shirts that follow the body, but do not rest an embarrassing amount of it. Her garnet cashmere and angora swing coat may well prove desirable enough to be chosen over the more wear-with-anything practicality of a black or navy version.

At Ralph Lauren there were coats that were all-enveloping, snug yet luxurious enough to explain their designer prices and in delicious watercolour soft colours. Also desirable from Ralph Lauren were shirts and turtle-neck sweaters that would update an existing wardrobe, and the slender silhouette of narrow jackets over ankle-length skirts or flared trousers. These can look surprisingly slimming once you get over the fact the flare really has made a comeback.

Ralph Lauren gave tailoring a menswear edge, looking to Savile Row - as he did with his menswear lines - in three button, single-breasted, City pin-stripes matched with collars and ties. Yet these managed not to look either "costume" or ridiculous, for the cut was fem-



Donna Karan: practical chauffeur coat in luxurious cashmere



Donna Karan: canary yellow jacket reminiscent of the 1970s (and Gucci's revamped 1990s)



Ralph Lauren: soft suede safari jacket and slightly flared jeans



Calvin Klein: the standout silk jersey dress of the season



Ralph Lauren: eveningwear reminiscent of Halston



Ralph Lauren: Savile Row-style pinstriped single-breasted tailoring



Donna Karan: maxi coat in autumn's ubiquitous suede

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CLARETS

PROPERTY

Pressure for places in the schools which consistently star in the government's league tables is forcing parents to house-hunt ever earlier in their children's lives. To get into the right secondary school, they need to get into the correct feeder school and to get into that they may have to live in the right area by the time their eldest child reaches the tender age of four. Eton may have stiff entry requirements, but at least it does not involve moving house.

School hot-spots and property hot-spots have been merging ever closer since the publication of school league tables. The more evidence there is for a school's success, the greater the competition becomes for places, meaning a growing demand for houses in the right area.

In those areas, home owners who have outgrown the education system can find an over-supply of buyers bidding up the price of their house. For young parents it means a grim struggle to buy in the right catchment area. As one relocation agent remarked, these days everyone knows which schools are top of the charts.

This pressure for places looks set to increase still further. The government has decided to publish the results of the national tests currently being taken by seven and 11-year-olds, which will mean league tables for primary as well as secondary schools.

In February, the publication of a list of 200 outstanding schools by the Chief Inspector in his annual report was immediately picked up by estate agents. Within two weeks, one primary school featured was being mentioned in the particulars of a house being sold in its catchment area.

Peter Wilde, one of the Compass group of relocation agents, estimates that the right catchment area adds at least 10 per cent to the price or rental value of a good house. For properties which are generally difficult to sell, such as those built in the 1960s and 1970s, it can mean the difference between selling or not.

The demand applies equally in the state and the private sector. Wilde had one City client moving from London to Northamptonshire who was willing to increase his rental budget from £1,600 to £2,000 a month in order to be near his preferred prep school. The family was only prepared to buy when it had established that the school was as good as it had hoped.

Knight Frank in Oxford was asked to find one family a house within 20 minutes drive of the recently opened Chandlings Manor prep school. It said the headmistress felt no child of that age should travel for more than 20 minutes in the car before school.



Cluttons' guide price for this house in Dorchester, Oxfordshire, is £385,000



Peter Gibbs with daughters Sally and Heather who attend Dorney County Combined School, Bucks

# How schools affect home prices

Anne Spackman explains why parents could soon be putting their children down for Eton and Cluttons

Although there are good schools creating pockets of high demand all over the UK, two of the highest concentrations are in north Oxford and Buckinghamshire. Two years after Chandlings Manor opened in Oxford, The Dragon, the city's most popular prep school, opened Lymans, its own pre-prep, in September. The trend for strong schools to open feeder schools is increasing, according to Isis, the independent schools information service. It says the number of under-fives educated privately has risen from 5.5 per cent in 1984 to 6.8 per cent in 1994.

The Dragon and Lymans are among several good schools in north Oxford. Families who buy in the area tend to stay, making for a shortage of properties for sale. Savills' Banbury office has just put a typical five-bedroom Victorian semi in Farnham Road on the market.

Top of the particulars comes the information that it is within a 10-minute walk of Oxford High School for Girls, and within easy access to both St Edwards and The Dragon

School. In need of modernisation, it is priced at £375,000 and two bidders are already competing above the guide price.

"We have noticed a marked increase in demand in the last two years from people who wish to be accessible to the excellent schooling in and around Oxford," says Ian McConnell, of Savills. "Within Oxford itself there is a requirement to be within walking distance of the schools. There are significant value variations within a relatively small area. For example, not having to cross a major road between the house and the school would enhance the value of a property."

Knight Frank in Oxford is currently selling a house which meets that criterion. The four-storey semi in Norham Road is slightly smaller than the traditional north Oxford house but its hefty price of £435,000 may be a reflection of the fact that it is near Dragon Lane which leads directly to the Dragon School.

John Little, of agents John D Wood, says it is difficult to find any

family house in north Oxford for under £350,000. The good Victorian six-bedroom houses are now going for £400,000 and more. He has recently sold a two-bedroom garden flat for £165,000 and a large three-bedroom flat on Woodstock Road for £285,000. "Outside of the very best home counties locations, you must have the closest prices to London," Little said. "If the right house comes up, we can introduce 40 or 50 potential buyers immediately. Anything good goes very fast."

The other Oxfordshire hot spot is to the south of the city where commuters to London seek to compromise their need to be near Didcot railway station with their children's schooling. Cluttons has just taken on a five-bedroom Grade II listed Georgian house in Dorchester on Thames priced at £285,000. Fifteen families have looked at it in the first week - half seeking to leave London to be near good schools.

The county which stars in both the league tables and the Chief Inspector of schools' top 200 is

Buckinghamshire, one of the last bastions of the grammar school. Peter Gibbs, who runs Hamptons' office in Maidenhead, Berkshire, is one of many who has decided to live across the border.

"It is vital to live within the county boundary if you want to get into the schools," Gibbs says. "We wanted our daughters to go to one of two good primary schools, St Nicholas's at Taplow or Dorney School. The junior schools tend to feed the good grammar schools and the chance of getting such a good education without having to pay for it is a great incentive."

David Ellerington is the education specialist for Compass Relocation and a former headmaster. He provides a similar service on the schools front as his colleagues do on the property side, finding the best schools for individual families. He says grammar schools are the greatest magnet for parents. "Some parents will extend their mortgage to purchase a house in a grammar school area because they don't have

to consider the costs of private education," he says. "It is a chicken and egg situation: if the schools are known to be good, house prices go up. London is one of the most difficult places. If you are not into the system early on you find it very difficult to slot in later. All the schools are full."

Karen and Mike Chazarian faced this problem with their two children, Christopher and Abigail, aged six and five. They live in Buckinghamshire, in the right village for the school they wanted, but they were one street beyond the catchment area.

The family found a house within the area for Ley Hill County Combined school, but the deal fell through at the last minute and they lost their place. "I phoned Chesham Prep and asked if we could take up our place there, but we were too late," Karen Chazarian said. "We considered buying a small house and renting it out just to have an address in the catchment area. In the end we got in an appeal, after

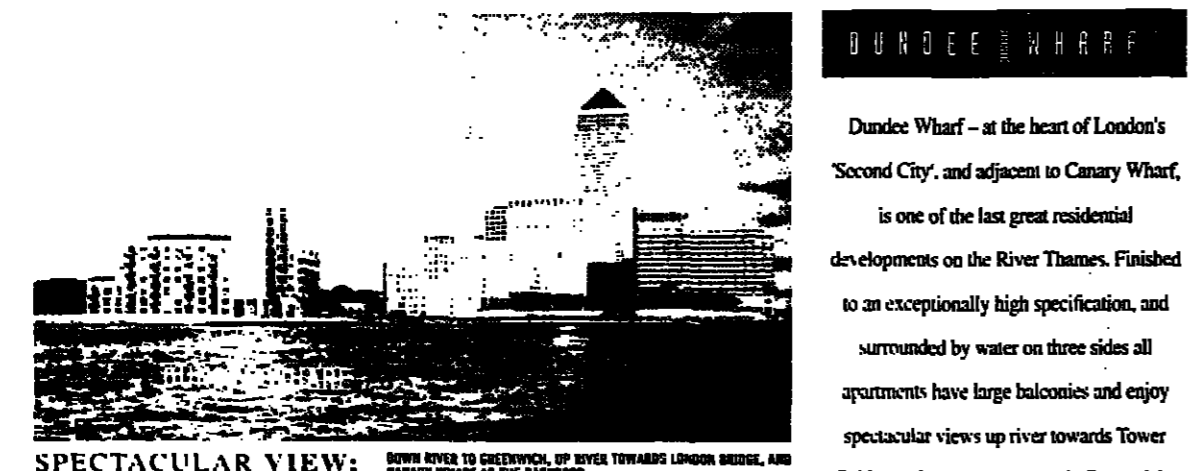
showing them solicitors' letters which proved we had nearly bought the house and were still looking."

All this was 18 months ago and still the family is looking for a detached house in the £250,000 price range in one of the right roads. "The fees for the private school were £1,000 a term. We thought we might as well put that into the mortgage," she said.

She says at least one third of her friends have moved house to be in the right school catchment area. If the publication of more league tables further increases competition, parents will not just be registering their children with schools at birth; they will also be registering with estate agents.

Peter Wilde, Compass Relocation, Peterborough, 01700-470073; David Ellerington, Compass education specialists, 01711-417641; Knight Frank, Oxford, 01865-750077; Savills, Banbury, 01295-353335; John D Wood, Oxford, 01865-311522; Cluttons, Oxford, 01865-793900; Hamptons, Maidenhead, 01628-22121.

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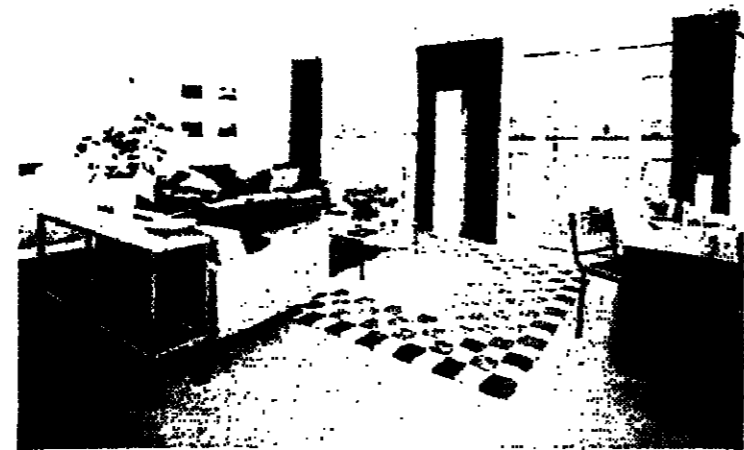
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BOOKS

Towards a culture of simulation

Jon Turney on a work which charts the post-modernist's evolving relationship with the newest machines

Deep in the computer culture, some are already living in a new world. Awake, they are forever bathed in the pale light of the screen, moving among an array of windows in each of which they play a different role in an on-line game. Asleep, they dream of new cyber-conquests. For these habitués of the Internet, real life is RL, just another window.

seemed to them alive. She assesses what has happened in the dozen years since her first notable book on computers, *The Second Self*. Her answer has three parts. First, she describes the shift in the way we use computers, or in operating systems. That shift is from the flashing cursor waiting for you to type a command which is the personal computer's welcome in MS-DOS, to the pretend desktop of the Apple Macintosh or its poor imitation, a PC running Windows.

With icons and windows, this new world is gone. The actual machine is totally disguised. It is, for us, easier to use. But we no longer worry about what is happening behind the screen. This shift is part of a larger change, she believes, from what she calls culture of calculation to one of simulation. The first is a modern way of doing things, which as people who want to analyse what is going on, who demand a detailed understanding of underlying levels before they are comfortable with a machine.

Life on the screen: identity in the age of the internet by Sherry Turkle. Weidenfeld and Nicolson £18.99, 347 pages

Finally, she picks up the shift so many are starting to experience - not finding ways of relating to computers, but new ways of relating to other people through computers. This is not so much the world of the millions now on the net to send and receive e-mail or explore the world-wide web, but the minority who play the multi-user games called MUDs. In these new elec-

tronic environments, wing on a keyboard becomes a vehicle for interaction with other people, all of whom have assumed virtual identities. Like the Mac user, the characters conceal their identity: the unusual dragon-slaying may be invoked by the fingers of seven stone workings.

users than anything they have experienced before. It does offer participation in new kinds of communities, though stretching the sense of that word in new ways. These opportunities, and their wider cultural impact, are still evolving, and Turkle is careful not to suggest there is any firm conclusion about what they will mean to us. It is clear they are neither a pointless diversion nor a chance to lose your grip on reality. Some return from their virtual life enriched by experiencing different selves which they can use to strengthen aspects of their identity. Some simply confirm their dissatisfaction with the way they are outside the game. One is left feeling that it would be as well to have a therapist on hand, preferably Turkle, before venturing into the MUD. Otherwise, as with other aspects of the information superhighway, when it comes to virtual identities the psychologically rich are likely to get richer, the poor to be left behind.

Honey, I shunk the house

Michael Thompson-Noel homes in on a domestic conundrum

According to cosmologists, black holes emit such gigantic quantities of particles in such random permutations that if we monitored enough black holes for long enough, we would see all sorts of things fly out: David Hockney's swimming pool, 102 dalmatians, William Shakespeare. He would not be our William Shakespeare, though he would be identical to ours - even sub-atomically.

I buy all that. What flabbergasts me is the thought that a facsimile of *Not At Home* will emerge, some day, from some black hole. What makes it flabbergasting is that the version that has popped out here is quite beyond belief.

An immensely strange book. Peculiar in every particle. Unintentionally funny to the zillionth degree. Subtitled *The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, it indicates the depths of derangement to which those who write about the history of art, design and aesthetics can plunge when they really try.

In his introduction, editor Christopher Reed states that the idea of domesticity - separation from the workplace, privacy, comfort, focus on the family - was invented as recently as the early 1800s, being a product of the confluence of capitalist economics, technological breakthroughs and Enlightenment notions of individuality.

However, for many a long year, says Reed, *avant-garde* thinking, particularly in architecture but also in painting and interior design, has been the enemy of domesticity and of the home.

An early and influential figure in this was Viennese architect Adolf Loos, who in a 1908 manifesto equated ornament with crime. Loos maintained that the tendency to decorate the home was akin to graffiti and tattooing, and that all these things were degenerate, unlike forward-looking modernism.

According to Reed, the anti-domestic tenor of *avant-garde* architectural theory is nowhere more evident than in the career of modernism's most influential architect, Le Corbusier, whose writings were as important as his buildings.

Le Corbusier's essays made him the pre-eminent early spokesman for modernist design, and there was no doubting where he stood. He inveighed against the "sentimental hysteria" surrounding the "cult of the house" and declared his determination to create a "machine for living in". His heroes were engineers - "healthy and virile, active and useful" - as well as big businessmen, bankers and merchants.

Le Corbusier argued that old-fashioned houses produced by conventional architects ruined the health and morale of their male inhabitants. In their homes, "everything seems to contradict their real existence - rooms too small, a conglomeration of useless and disparate objects, and a sickening spirit reigning over so



Cover for 'House and Garden' (1951) by Horst P. Horst, taken from 'Horst: Sixty Years of Photography' (Thames and Hudson)

many shams... Our industrial friends seem sheepish and shrivelled, like tigers in a cage. However, today, after more than 100 years of dispute, the steel-and-glass aesthetic of Loos, Le Corbusier and others, with its antagonism to the idea of the home as a haven of privacy and as an extension of individual or family identity, is probably losing influence. "The domestic," claimed, "is returning to a position of cultural prominence," though it is too early to tell whether this new focus on domesticity will hold for the arts or for society.

His book, he says, is "dedicated to its readers in the hope that it will occasion moments of self-consciousness, creativity and pleasure in our inevitably constant fashioning of home life." Fair enough. Yet from its coherent introduction, *Not At Home* veers swiftly into a stu-

pidying assemblage of useless erudition and hot-house prose such as you would never, in this galaxy, expect to find collected. *Not At Home* contains 17 long essays. One of them, by Joyce Henri Robinson, a specialist in late 19th century French art, is entitled "Hi Honey, I'm Home: Weary (Neurotic) Businessmen and the Formulation of a Serenely Modern Aesthetic".

But the essay richest in madly profoundity is the one by Kenneth K. Silver, associate professor of fine arts at New York University, called "Master Bedrooms, Master Narratives: Home, Homosexuality and Post-War Art". I have read this several times and still have only the dimmest glimmering of what it is about.

Part of Silver's essay is given to a discussion of Robert Rauschenberg's 1966 painting *Bed*. In 1966, abstract expressionism was at its zenith, and the appearance of Pop art was still seven years in the future. "Bed", writes Prof Silver, "was clearly designed to be provocative, from its juxtapositions of raw and cooked - wild paint splatters vs methodical, self-contained, Albers-like concentric squares, folkloric quilt vs *avant-garde* abstraction - to the ontological uncertainty it makes palpable: is this a painting-as-bed or bed-as-painting? In which direction, it seems to ask, have we moved: from the studio to the home or vice versa?"

Get it? After many readings, I think I do. Yet there are numerous assertions in "Master Bedrooms, Master Narratives..." that are far more challenging than that, as indeed there are throughout this beautifully pilated book, in which sex looms surprisingly large.

The reason for all the sex, says Reed, is that it is primarily in the home "that we are constructed as sexual and gendered beings". It may be weird, but *Not At Home* will not get the better of me. For several weeks I have been carrying it from room to room of what - I now see - is my hideously kitschy, pre-modernist flat. It has vulgarly bright wallpapers, fitted carpets, mass-produced ornaments, bourgeois furniture, spotlights, uprights, predictable artworks. I have a porcelain dalmatian on a little table in the sitting room, for God's sake, the horror of which is matched by the porcelain siamese on the little table on the other side of the fireplace.

For those with eyes to see, *Not At Home* is probably stuffed with wisdom. Yet what an astonishing thing: not only has it popped into existence once, but it will do so again. From out of a black hole, perhaps billions of years hence, will fly a 304-page book, claiming to have been printed in "Slovenia", on the 98th page of which commences a 16-page essay by "Joyce Henri Robinson" entitled "Hi Honey, I'm Home..."

Rereadings/J.D.F. Jones On death and other journeys

These days, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* is usually found in the children's section of our bookshops (as are *Treasure Island* and *Peter Pan*, which suffer from a similar relegation). This is absurd. *Kim* is one of the most profound and original, mature and triumphant novels of this century. It must be reread to establish for all time its place as a great classic for grown-ups.

The book occupied Kipling for seven years, and in his memoirs he modestly claimed that "there was a good deal of beauty in it, and not a little wisdom...". That sums up *Kim*. The beauty is to do with the India it describes in loving detail, which is why this "impartialist" book has always had a host of Indian admirers. The wisdom reaches deeper into the meaning of this apparently artless, picaresque tale of the adventures of a young Irish boy called Kimball O'Hara and an elderly Tibetan lama.

It is the tale of not one but two quests, one young, one old. They relate to the two most important rites de passage of all our lives - the period when a child becomes a man, and the period when an adult confronts his death.

The genius of the book is to show how these two apparently separate journeys in a vividly, ecstatically described India are inextricably related and intertwined. They therefore become the same quest - the joint quest that all of us must make in the course of our lives - and they realise themselves in the language of myth. The reason they share the journey is because of a mutual love between the boy and the old man; they teach each other, they need each other.

Kim, the 13-year-old boy, is introduced as a wondrous mingling of Irish and Indian, white and brown, and then, straightaway, is inspired by the Lama's revelation of his quest/journey. The boy realises that to match the old man he should have his own ritual to seek, with its ritual and its symbolism and its inspiration. The only totem he can think of comes from his only legacy from his soldier father - the image of a great red bull on a green field. The Lama validates the boy's idea and postpones his own search to wait for Kim to catch up with him, when they will make the journey together, starting out on the Great Trunk Road.

Kim is the first to find his totem, when he meets up with his father's old regiment, but his Indian-ness is saved thanks to the love of the Lama and the generosity of the Indian society around him, which is crystallised in two characters drawn deliberately by Kipling from extreme Indian stereotypes - the Pathan horse dealer Mahbub Ali, and the fat

Bengali intellectual Hurree Babu. Between them they keep a fatherly eye on Kim's youth and schooling while he prepares for his initiation as a man, his career as participant in the Great Game of espionage - and his resumption of the joint quest with the Lama. Far too much attention is usually paid to the (admittedly spellbinding) detail of Kim's recruitment as a junior agent in the Great Game by Colonel Creighton and his associates - detail which can distract attention from the deeper meaning of Kim's journey to the Himalayas. He rejoins the old man and travels from the plains to the High Hills, where encounters problems, both



physiand dramatic. He outwits the Russians but has to retreat in danger and distress; at this stage of his male adolescent development, Kim encounters two older women: the Maharani and the Wom of Shamlegh; one motherly, the other kisses him.

This idea is taken at a prodigious pace by Kipling as he moves beyond the realm of the adventure into a revelation of his deep meaning. The Lama has [used, through his adventures] Kim, that he must retreat from the high mountains to the plains; there a symbol in this, while, literally and literally, Kipling to carry him. At this point Kim and the Lama, we are understood, are close to death, and also within sight their quests' ends: one may say that they have both gone into the Underworld.

Kipling talks with a desperate, near-asleep - a dozen pages tell it off. The boy is saved by Maharani, who lays him, "ever than sleep", in the arms of "Mother Earth". The old man, after fasting for two days - a sort of embracing of death - in (apparently) dying is reminded of the boy and asks to return from death of pity and love for the boy. He thereby finds his totem, his River of the Awe, just as Kim has discovered his Red Bull, has made his passage, and is initiated.

That's quite a story to be dismissed to the kid's bookshelf...

A tragic hero of the scientific sphere

Heroes create themselves; celebrities are created by the media. In a media age it is hard to tell which is which. The first half of the 20th century was a time of spectacular development in science, and the leaders of that process were turned into stars by newspaper, film and radio. They were portrayed as Titans, geniuses, lovable rascals, beings from a different planet called The Future.

Linus Pauling was one such. He attained celebrity early in his scientific career by strikingly imaginative work in chemistry, proposing important theories about the bonds which hold atoms together in molecules. His theories have been superseded, which is often the way in science; but

by then he had become a Nobel prize winner, showered with honorary doctorates and fellowships of scientific academies around the world. From this lofty platform Pauling launched himself into two very contrasting careers. One was as a courageous political campaigner for nuclear disarmament and peace, and against political witch-hunters in the US. For his peace work Pauling won the rare honour of a second Nobel prize.

The other career was as a champion of dubious claims about the efficacy of huge amounts of vitamins, principally vitamin C, as panaceas against disease. Apart from the air of quackery that clung to this, it brought into relief an unhappy trick Pauling had of sailing close to the wind over questions of authorship and attribution, a jealous matter in science, whose practitioners are keen to get the credit for what they do, not just for pride but because research grant, prizes, promotions and opportunities turn on it. Earlier in his career Pauling had sometimes provoked colleagues by claiming more than his due and reaping the benefit. In his late vitamin campaign matters were worse: he suppressed

research in his own institute which contradicted his view and dismissed the researchers who arrived at them. Even so summary a sketch shows that Pauling is LINUS PAULING: A LIFE IN SCIENCE AND POLITICS by Ted Goertzel and Ben Goertzel HarperCollins £18.99, 300 pages

extraordinary figure. As a specimen of high gifts, contradictions, stubbornness, creativity and wrong-headedness he is hard to beat. As an example of the Olympian stature conferred on its practitioners by science earlier this century, he is paradigmatic - as he is in showing how such influence can be used for better and worse. And as a comment on the oppressive, obsessive, ugly episode of anti-Communist zealotry in the US after the second world war, his story is an illumination - not least because when the Republican light took him on, they found him a formidable debater who made fools of them in Congressional hearings, contributing largely to the collapse of their use. Ted and Ben Goertzel -

They miss many opportunities: Pauling's aptness for getting into trouble might have been prefigured in the early boyhood episode of his falling into a backyard privy; and the authors pass without comment a reminiscence by a cousin that the young Pauling was "more normal and average than most boys". But for such things a sense of humour is required, and the authors' interests lie elsewhere. The best thing in the book is its account of Pauling's brave resistance to McCarthyism. It also shows the reader's appetite to know more about the history of chemistry,

molecular biology and medicine in the 20th century, because Pauling's activity contributed to all that. And although science has since moved on, it is fascinating to see how the beauty and power of the scientific imagination expressed itself in his work for he was indeed a native thinker of a high order. F. Scott Fitzgerald said: "Show me a hero and I will write you a tragedy." King and his wife for many years consumed 10 grams of vitamin C a day - 200 times US recommended daily allowance - as a specific against disease but especially colds and cancer. Pauling called his "allergies"; cancer killed him both.

A.C. Graylin

صلى الله عليه وسلم

السنة الثالثة

BOOKS

Words are not enough

About the time he wrote *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* in 1980, Milan Kundera was in a process which he has described as crossing the border to a country where the language of the country left behind sounds "as meaningless as the twittering of birds." It is a process which many expatriate writers since Nabokov have experienced. Joseph Brodsky actually turned himself into an American poet, without Nabokov's advantage of a Cambridge education. Now Kundera has written his first novel in French, and his first novel in five years.

The irony is that *Slowness* appears to have been very poorly translated. I say "appears" because we have no means of knowing which translation - the mental one from Czech into Kundera's French, or the physical one from Kundera's French into English - has gone wrong. This is something of a handicap to the richness of the book, like a shortage of egg whites in a soufflé; still there is a good deal of vintage Kundera to enjoy. Four brief stories intertwine and overlap to explore the notion of slowness. The writer, apparently Kundera himself, goes to stay in a chateau hotel, and contemplates the account of a Marquis and his mistress who dallied hereabouts in the 18th century. Into this story he introduces the account of a young intellectual, Vincent; a Czech professor, newly freed from a job as a construction worker, and a telly-don called Berck, who is based all too recognisably on certain French intellectuals.

Indeed, self-congratulatory **SLOWNESS** by Milan Kundera *Faber & Faber £14.99, 144 pages*

Intellectuals, enjoying a conference at the hotel, make a welcome reappearance from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, as does sexual capriciousness. Where in that book Marketa tried to imagine her husband headless during an orgy, here Vincent is unable to have sex with Julie, the girl he has desired violently, but goes through all the attendant movements because people are watching. One of the watchers is the humiliated Czech professor, who, overcome by bogus sentiment, has forgotten to deliver his lecture on an insect found only in Prague. He strips off for a consolation swim the better to give his impressive muscles an outing, and discovers what he takes to be an orgy gathering pace. Another woman, spurned by Berck, attempts suicide in the pool, watched curiously by her lover, a cameraman. The stolid Czech jumps in to save her, and receives a punch in the face for his troubles. All very Stoppardian: farce mixed in with intellectual cynicism. Kundera's cruel ironies on intellectual life and professional jealousy, his mockery of expatriate disappointments, his pitiless observation of the real - and usually based - aims of fine words, his keen interest in the farcical nature of sex, his playful reorganisation of the unities of novel writing, are all present in abundance. But there is an almost palpable sense of striving for a lightness of touch, a striving which is hindered by the wooden translation. And the ideas of slowness opposed to rigidity, and discretion opposed to exhibitionism, seem no more than an existential gloss applied rather lightly, mere decoration compared with the sublime notion, inscribed on every dissident's heart, that the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against oblivion. In the end the wonderful dexterity of Kundera's work is not enough; the reason is that there are no remotely heroic characters whose fate we can enjoy. In this sense it may be true that Kundera is finding life on the other side of the border difficult. But then, since 1988, Kundera's life has been a succession of intellectual border crossings.

Justin Cartwright

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MINERVA PRESS

I read John Keane's *Reflections on Violence* over the Easter weekend, sandwiched between the two instalments of Channel Four's adaptation of Gulliver's Travels. The interplay was uncanny, almost eerie. Keane's tract, a virtuous work by a political theorist filled with passion to promote a better world, charts in gruesome detail the "long century of violence" behind us. The horror is as sickening yesterday as half a century ago. We fit from Hitler to mass executions of Bosnian Moslems ("the Jews of the late 20th century"), from the gulags to first-hand accounts of the slaughter of civilians like animals in Rwanda ("The place was red. Blood was flowing like water. I could see babies sucking the breasts of their dead mothers...").

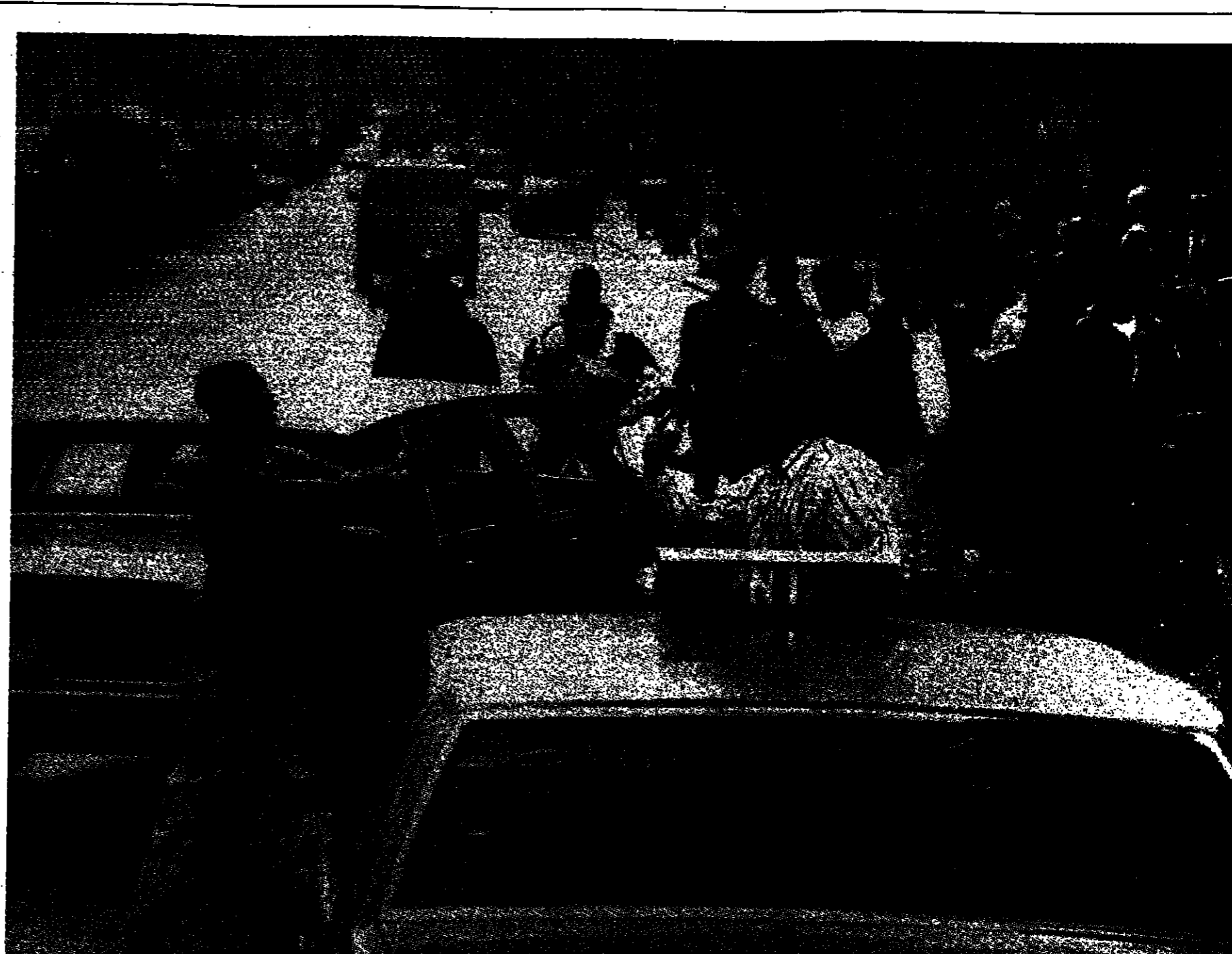
Then came Swift's biting satire. The tiny Lilliputians waging their continuous war between the Big-enders and the Little-enders. The intellectual Lilliputians extracting sunlight out of cucumbers while bombing each other with gay abandon. And the wise Houyhnhnms, a race of just, truthful and peace-loving horses, who regard with disgust the animal savagery of the human yahoos, and consign Gulliver to their midst for all his refinement as an English doctor.

Keane does not mention Gulliver.

REFLECTIONS ON VIOLENCE by John Keane *Verso £39.95 200 pages*

But he cites Swift's still more pregnant satire, his *Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country*. The "modest proposal" derives from the narrator's discovery from "a very knowing American" that "a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled". There is no need to go on.

When I first read the *Modest Proposal*, as a teenager, it was fascinating but fantastic. Re-reading it after two days of Keane and Gulliver, it seemed a plausible economic development prospectus for a third-world superpower rivalry. In a brilliant passage, Keane even rejects the notion of "civil war" as commonly understood in terms of finite conflicts within previously integral political communities. On the con-



Acts of everyday violence: road rage breaks out on the streets of New York

Dangerous forces unleashed

Violence is everywhere, from families to nations to superpower rivalries, writes Andrew Adonis

Violence is everywhere, from families to nations to superpower rivalries, writes Andrew Adonis. The very organisation of his *Reflections* - a succession of rapid-fire gobbets on different aspects of violence and attempts to curb it, loosely organised into chapters - sums up the essential argument. Violence is everywhere, from families to nations to inter-continental superpower rivalries. In a brilliant passage, Keane even rejects the notion of "civil war" as commonly understood in terms of finite conflicts within previously integral political communities. On the con-

trary, western democracies are themselves wracked by "molecular civil war", exhibited by perpetual low-level violence in urban districts such as Solingen, Tower Hamlets, Los Angeles and Marseille, which "disturbingly parallels" the large-scale conflicts to be found elsewhere. "Every carriage on a city's underground... can become a miniature Bosnia". This is not an easy read. The prose is dense and often impenetrable. Of Ernest Gellner: "His neo-Popperian

account of scientific progress misses the elective affinity between post-foundationalist perspectives in philosophy and the social sciences, the attitude of democratic scepticism and the horizontal diversity of forms of life that are characteristic institutional features of any civil society". Swift would have sent Gulliver around the world again in search of modern social science. Yet beneath the verbiage lies a deeply humane attempt to grapple with one of the greatest of human

predicaments - how to curb natural impulses to violence, uncivility and destruction. (Keane agonises long over where the impulses come from, but no matter.) He does not hesitate to address the critical question: how much violence is needed to contain violence? There is no simple formula. In some circumstances the pacifists will be right. In other cases, where violence serves "to reduce or eradicate violence", or "serves as a means of the creation or strengthening of a

pluralistic nonviolent civil society secured by publicly accountable political-legal institutions", it may be justified. But only may, because the forces unleashed by any violence can never be accurately predicted. It is a question of judgement in particular circumstances - a depressing but sane conclusion. Do not, of course, ask where the necessary wisdom is to come from. Just recall that after his return home Gulliver spent four hours a day talking to his horses.

Behind the 'Dear Bill' image

Malcolm Rutherford on an essential addition to the Thatcher bibliography

Street years, Denis Thatcher had a cardinal rule: "never give interviews, never talk to the press". The reason was that if you gave one interview, you would be asked for more, and even more important, there was a strong chance that the reptiles would misreport you. Lord Deedes of the Daily Telegraph - the "Dear Bill" of the famous *Private Eye* letters - persuaded him to relent and talk to Carol. And, as Denis admits, it was the "Dear Bill" letters which contributed to the making of a consort, at least in the public image. Gin-swilling, golf-playing, mad about rugby and thoroughly reactionary

on practically every subject under the sun, he emerged as a lovable figure, a force for good far more than ill. This image is not quite true. Thatcher has done her homework, including research in New Zealand where the minor, but useful, Thatcher fortunes began through applying arsenic to sheep dip at the end of the 19th century. Denis (spelt Dennis in his birth certificate in Lewisham in 1915) always had an eye for a balance sheet. When Margaret was a relatively unknown cabinet minister and the Rolls-Royce crisis blew up in the early 1970s, he had read the accounts

for the last six years and concluded that the company was basically bust. The cabinet was much impressed by Margaret's knowledge of corporate finance, but said Denis modestly: "Don't ever do that to me again! Supposing I'd been wrong?" On some matters he was a liberal. He was opposed to capital punishment while Margaret was in favour.

Once, however, the tables were turned. In a moment of relaxation Denis told the annual dinner of the London Society of Rugby Football Union Referees in 1978: "If the soccer players can go and play in Russia and our table tennis team can go and play in China, as sure as hell we can play our game in South Africa." He forgot that reptiles were present in the form of rugby correspondents, and it was left to Margaret (and the Queen) to pick up the Commonwealth pieces. The book has a sting in the tail. Higher wisdom in the Tory Party always had it that when the time came for Margaret to go, Denis alone

could tell her. According to this account, Denis did his stuff somewhere around Christmas 1988 on the perfectly reasonable ground that "ten years were enough". He thought he had succeeded. Then Margaret went off to Lord Whitelaw, one of the founts of the higher wisdom in the first place. Whitelaw said: "You can't do that, there'll be blood on the walls when choosing your successor. It will split the party." So Margaret stayed, as Denis had always suspected she wanted to do. Denis was right and Whitelaw was wrong. It is quite striking that Whitelaw is not listed in the book as one of his favourite golfing partners. But the last word is with Lord Deedes. "It can be argued", he told Carol, "that Denis would have had a pretty dull life without the amazing coincidence of being married to the first woman prime minister of Britain."

BELOW THE PARAPET: THE BIOGRAPHY OF DENIS THATCHER by Carol Thatcher *HarperCollins £16.99, 303 pages*

Fiction/Antony Thornicroft

Droit de seigneur through the ages

are utterly convincing because they are placed in a very precise historic context, by the struggle between the receding Celts and the triumphant Anglo-Saxons, the Celtic Church and the Roman. Anyone needing to recap on the arguments for the dating of Easter should reach for Bragg. Of course it is too long. The momentum never quite recaptures the opening chapters set in the great hall of Cathal, where honour demands Bega be buried alive if she objects to her father's choice of husband. But for a surprising number of pages Bragg manages to conjure up some of the epic grandeur of a Tolkien or a T.H. White: the Arthurian influence is pervasive. When Padric, the Celtic prince dedicated to the preservation of his tribal kingdom (based around Bragg's native Carisle) fights to the death, together with his two brothers, against a Northumbrian raiding party, we are back to the best of the Boys' Own Paper.

CREDO by Melvyn Bragg *Sceptre £16.99, 757 pages*

APPASSIONATA by Jilly Cooper *Bantam £16.99, 623 pages*

A WOMAN'S PLACE by Edwina Currie *Hodder & Stoughton £16.99, 364 pages*

Bragg has his prosaic lapses; I doubt if people "intuitively" in this fearsome era, and I am slightly unhappy about an Irish coinage this early - but taking his inspiration from St Bega's church in the Lake District, where he went for bike rides in his youth, he has brought to terrible life the most deadly period of British history. In contrast Jilly Cooper is just plain irritating. Seven pages of acknowledgments suggests she has done her research into the work and play of an orchestra, but her invention is so exaggerated and so flippantly written that it is hard to believe a word. Brass players traditionally like a drink: so the brass section of the Ruzmister Symphony Orchestra, known as the Celtic Mafia, are irredeemable brutish louds. Conductors are imperious beings, so the arch villain Roberto Ramaldini automatically exercises *droit de seigneur* over the more comely members of the band. Orchestras feel liberated on overseas tours; so this one ends up bursting out of a jacuzzi. Jilly Cooper just cannot resist a strained pun or a limp double-entendre: in the fanciful sex scenes (copulating on a glockenspiel suggests a really desperate failure of imagination), the protagonists are too concerned to perfect their post-coital quips than to blend with their partners. But what really kills the book is the fact that all the characters are as insufferable as they are unlikely, and the plot is lifted from an early Angela Brazil novel: will new

girl (pianist turned maestro Abigail) win round the naughty Lower Third (her sex-obsessed, irresponsible, orchestra) who tease her to death? Jilly Cooper might tilt at the correct bogeys - the Arts Council mandarins who make the performance of more works by lesbian composers the condition of a grant, the malevolent influence of sponsors - but there is a hollow-ness to it all, a heaviness of touch that is insulting to the dedicated, overworked, introspective musicians who compose most orchestras. And, for all the name dropping, Cooper manages to mis-spell Pissarro. It is a relief to turn to the straightforward, almost gentlemanly, world of politics as observed through the wonderfully partial eyes of Edwina Currie. *A Woman's Place* may be short on plot - this second adventure of the curiously Currie-like junior health minister Elaine Stalker is basically identical to the MP's first political fandango, *A Parliamentary Affair* - but she is excellent on the inside workings of parliament. Any student of politics could hardly do better than use this as a source book, although I do not quite know what to make of lines such as: "through her affair with Roger Dickson (the new PM) Elaine had become familiar with the ministerial area at the back of the Speaker's Chair".

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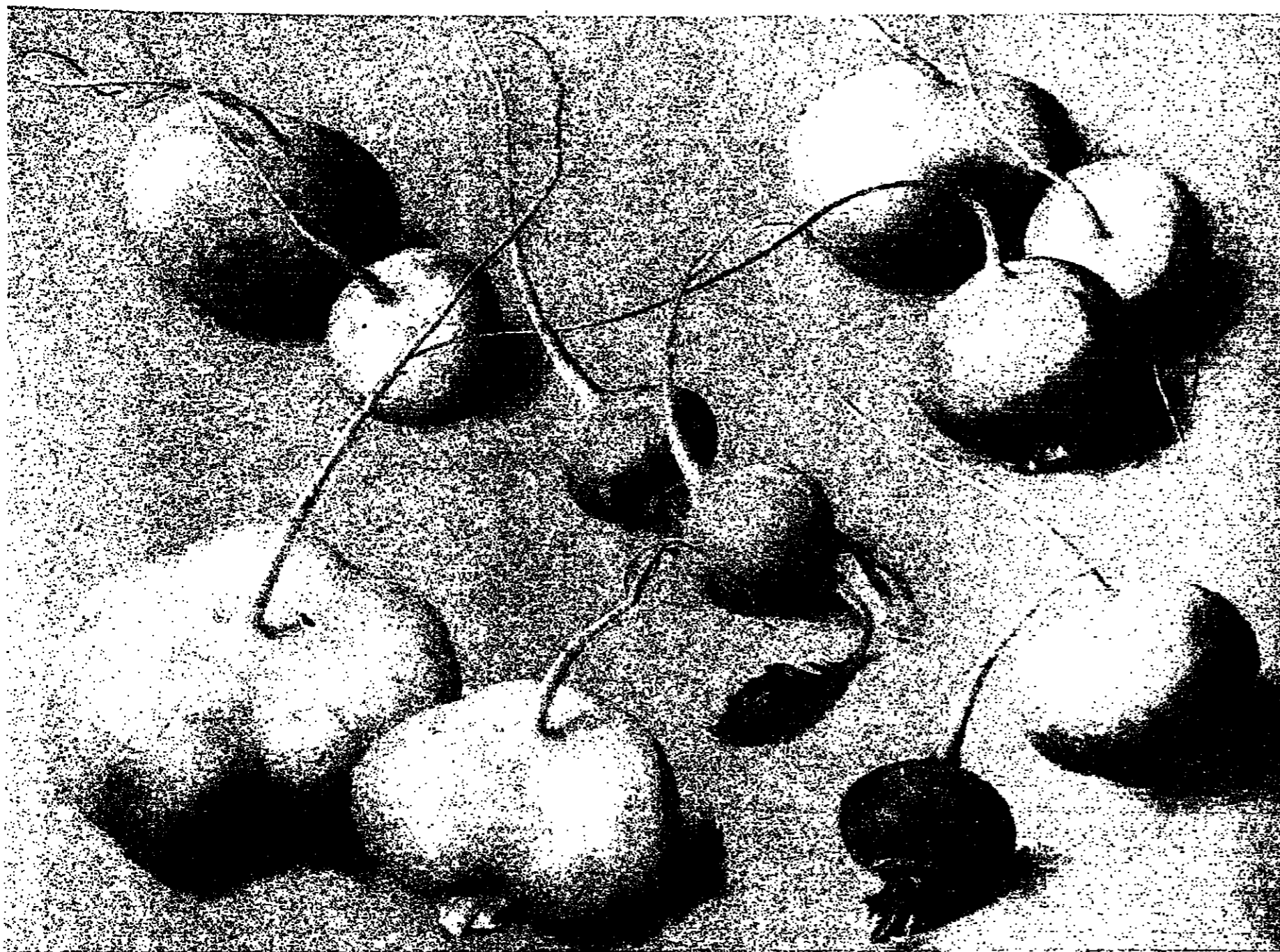
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ARTS



The artist invests the everyday with magic: Eliot Hodgkin's turnips are beautiful, strange and suddenly remarkable

# Language of still life lives on

It is all too easy, and never more so than in the time of so great a popular success as the current Cézanne retrospective, to see a public gallery such as the Tate only in terms of its temporary exhibitions. But these are but the icing on the cake. The essential gallery rests on its collections, and although it is impossible to show more than a fraction of what it holds, the Tate has set up satellites in Liverpool and Saint Ives, and continues its BP-sponsored programme of rehanging the regular displays. The scope thus revealed within the collections is astonishing, the effect one of surprise and interest at each new visit.

One special feature developed within this general exercise has been a series of study displays upon a given theme, some admittedly more successful than others. Now, with *Still But Not Silent*, it is the turn of the still life: some 30 paintings and a few sculptures, British and foreign, from the 17th century

to the present day, make up the show. Still life has been part of the currency of art since art began, albeit as a symbolic, narrative or decorative adjunct in the first instance. Though, from the late Renaissance on, particularly in 16th and 17th-century Spain and Holland, it was then developed as a distinct discipline and genre: it has clearly retained much of that old symbolic potency, if increasingly after an oblique and unspoken fashion.

A *vanitas* of 1696 by Edward Collier, an expatriate Dutchman who worked in England in later Stuart times, with its skull and wine-glass, its books and music, may be clear enough in the message it bears as to the evident transience of human pleasures. "What I was is passed by, / What I am away doth file..." runs the epigraph on the frontispiece of Wither's *Emblemes*, the book shown. But, 230-odd years on, does the small late-18th-century composition by Juan Gris (1924), with its

fruit in a bowl and its violin, carry that same, if now implicit message? The fruit will still rot, the music vanish on the air.

For all our latterday knowings and scepticism, we live still in a world stiff with sign and portent, if only the imagination stays free enough to read them. And it is through the still life that the artist invests the everyday with the magic of the particular and the remarkable. The point and the mystery of it is that such investment need not be conscious - for it is a truth of all true art that the artist intuitively puts into the work rather more than he knows.

Some artists do, of course, make conscious play with meaning and image. Ian Hamilton Finlay carves a machine-gun in elegant relief (1977), with the ironical inscription, *Lays*, beneath. Tim Head (1987) derives an abstracted image from schematic drawings of cuts of meat, sectioned brains and chromosome diagrams, all rather uncomfortable

in its prescient topicality. J.G.S. Herbert (c.1862), steeped in mid-Victorian piety, sets fading petals and decaying moss of a pre-Raphaelite exactitude against a bright vision of the celestial city.

But even they must leave the reading and experience of their work open and ambiguous to some degree. With Eliot Hodgkin (1971), all we get are a few turkeys, pink and white with long curly roots against a dull ochre ground. Yet how beautiful they are, and strange, and suddenly remarkable. David Bomberg at his lowest ebb, rejected as a war artist and his work ignored, quite simply renews himself with a bunch of lilies (1943), lush in their dark, rich, expressionist paint.

The *Vanitas*, *Fruits of the Earth*, *Flowers*, *Memorabilia*, the *Artist's Studio*: so runs the sequence of loose categories within the show. But in truth all are the same. We take them one by one and find Vanessa Bell's brace of pheasant

and bottle of wine (1931) quite at one with William Ferguson's hung game (1684), Cedric Morris's sunburst of lilies (1943) with Edward Middleditch's *Flowers* on a chair with bedspreads (1956), Gertrude Jekyll's black gardenia boots by William Nicholson (1920) with Cézanne's unfinished apple (1930), Steven McKenna's metaphysical baskets (1985) with Leonard Applebee's neo-Romantic King Crab (1938), David Tindle's altar-like table-top (1974) with Morandi's little white jars (1946).

Still life, the modest simulacrum of reality, its essential subject inevitable mutability and decay. All these works, in their several ways, are simply variations upon the *vanitas*. Still life can be nothing else.

William Packer

*Still But Not Silent* - still life painting and sculpture from the Tate Gallery collections: Tate Gallery, Millbank SW1, until July 14.

## Television/Martin Hoyle

# Life as soap scenario

Sometimes the temptation is to think that life is merely a sitcom, either because an apparently improbable and near-farical series like *Men Behaving Badly* (currently being repeated on BBC1) reveals the uncomfortable roughage of reality beneath the froth; or because a weird blend of comedy and *cinéma-vérité*, soap and sulphur, blurs the distinctions between calculated comedy and realistic reportage. The latter, epitomised by *Cardiac Arrest*, does not inspire confidence in the medical profession. Last week's episode sparked an uneasy echo with its five, prompting letters to the countless patients who had passed through his hands. The series is not as incisive as it was, the humour not as iconoclastic nor the observation as grim. At its best *Arrest* recalls ITV's *The Bill*, with its no-nonsense presentation of charmless and sometimes alarming cops in a job that seems to be 90 per cent frustration. I hope it does not take the easy way into the limbo of mindless entertainment.

The conviction of life as sitcom scenario storyboarded by that great media magnate in the sky received a filip from Wednesday's *Modern Times* (BBC2). Shades of both the wonderful *Men Behaving Badly* and the appalling *This Life* were raised at this funny, sad and altogether admonitory survey of the splendours of misery of finding a flatmate. Three nice Christian girls prayed before placing their ads, asking themselves what Jesus would have written. Two jolly pagan girls of the *Sloane* persuasion giggled about blokes ("Wouldn't Craig MacLachlan be lovely?" they gurgled) and hung out their "Catch a Man 94" tee-shirts to dry. Three young men with more caution than arithmetical ability wanted a girl to "balance" the household.

The Australian turned out to be on anti-biotics for eyes, lungs and, one suspected, much else. "I'm a bit of misery at the moment," he added superfluously. An Italian put their untidiness to shame, especially in the bathroom. A girl applicant revealed they had been using the washing-machine inausurately all their lives. Then their "fantastic" choice let them down at the last moment in what sounded like an understandable case of cold feet.

Of the three male questors one never spoke but lolled, blond, in bare feet and shorts, ringing variations on eating, drinking and pick-

ing his toes, sometimes simultaneously. They took polaroids of all their applicants and eventually opted for an aspiring solicitor with most "background" (Cambridge) in common. Questions were asked, in varying degrees of incredulity, about hoovering and tidying.

The three Christian girls' wistful search for a bloke with lots of friends threw up a few oddities, like the young man who had found religion on a train and urged them to come out with it if they found him "weird". He was not deemed suitable. We left them with a girl shaver who, though Christian, played rock music at ear-splitting levels and put up a boyfriend for the odd night when he was apparently too unwell to go home. They seemed rather worried.

Like all soaps, life has its ugly moments, unlike soaps its mysteries are sometimes never cleared up. Channel 4's *Dispatches* postulated the theory that WPC Yvonne Fletcher was killed not by a Libyan shooting from the embassy but by a sniper on a nearby building with the possible connivance of both British and American security services. An apparently wild conspiracy theory was backed up by physical evidence, and the assertion that a "major incident" was needed to raise the stakes against Gaddafi. I was not convinced, but an investigation is being urged.

BBC's more disturbing *Rough Justice* homed in on the Carl Bridgewater case: the paperboy was shot in 1979 on an isolated farm, seemingly having disturbed robbers. The four convictions depended on the disputed confession of one of them, since dead. The remaining three have always asserted their innocence. The programme unearthed an extraordinary set of circumstances pointing an inquisitive finger at the boy's neighbour who was jailed for shooting a friend shortly afterwards.

Personal description and sighting of vehicles, among other factors, indicate his presence, and his friend's, at the site of Carl's murder on the day of the crime. An overpowering set of coincidences: "fascinating, isn't it?... So what?" says the man, now out of jail. He seems to have taken the words out of the mouth of the Home Secretary who, now that the prosecution has expressed concern at the non-disclosure of evidence, is the only one blocking a new investigation. This probing journalism reaffirms one's faith in television.

## Radio

# The truth eludes moral pretensions

Fatuity of the month: Lord Beth was as dangerous as Hitler in this country. So squeaked the endemically hysterical *Moral Maze*, here represented by historian Dr David Starkey in one of his more ludicrous outbursts. Along with journalists, media dons have recently found their own circle of hell in public disrespect. Photogenic Michael Wood, another historian, has acquired a faint but unmistakable trendy Estuary accent, as heard on *Looking Forward to the Past*.

This once entertaining cross between a civilised conversation and an after-dinner party game has sunk into the fashionable doldrums of national self-loathing, with obligatory references to "these benighted shores" and the blighted promise of 1945, never fulfilled - as if the majority of people were not infinitely better off than they were. A bemused audience was chirped on by the bubbling Paul Boateng, a splendidly lively presenter. But Lord St John of Fawsley sounded determined to impersonate the club bore, which he is too clever and amusing to be allowed to do.

*Working History* inspires much more confidence, but then this contains serious information, not self-advertising babbling from the groves of academe. A recent edition looked at what we can adduce from bones as regards historical care for the handicapped. Enough for expert archeologists to disagree, it seems; for Charlotte Roberts detected signs of caring while Theya Mollison took a less comforting line. A congenitally deaf child from Roman times had been buried on its stomach as if "they" did not want its spirit to return. We were also reminded that the Anglo-Saxons plunged new-born babies into cold water to ensure that only the hardy would survive. John Slater presents this excellent look at behind-the-scenes history studies with no frills, no phoney accent. The programme instructs and entertains, not too far removed from the Bethalian ideal, despite distant squeals of protest from the *Starkeys* of the world.

It was not just Easter that made one understand Pilate's hopelessness in sorting out objective truth. At a lunch to launch Radio 4's *Asia File*, an Indian journalist asked

us with complaints that British programmes for the British public used British reporters. I am unsure what permutations can guarantee finding absolute truth or if such a thing exists. But using indigenous reporters to inform foreign audiences is as good a formula as any. Never mind; the commitment is strong and the stories need telling. Asia's plague of golf courses at first sounds trivial. But with a membership fee of 70,000 US dollars and large American enterprises concerned we are talking big money. No wonder senior civil servants are on the committees that give the go-ahead for the destruction of forests to make way for fairways. The homeless peasants, their houses and land gone without compensation, recall the enclosures in Tudor England or the Highland Clearances. *Asia File* is a fine addition to the BBC's generally noble service abroad.

Dr Starkey's fatuity just had the edge over Clare Rayner breezily lamely lamming into Christianity on *Today*, holding it responsible for war, bloodshed, slavery and probably the England cricket team as well. Even Melvyn Bragg was moved to snap at her woolly-minded generalisations.

Daphne Hampson of St Andrew's University has no such excuse for the solipsistic arrogance she displayed in *The Day God Died*, a pre-Easter discussion on the deity chaired by Joan Bakewell. By her own admission, feminist Daphne "couldn't give a damn about what Jesus said about women", she also knows "perfectly well" there could not have been a resurrection. Ageing iconoclast Don Capit defined his faith as acknowledging his own vitality. The only puzzle is why Daph and Don call themselves Christians.

Gordon Clough has died. His urbane, witty and friendly articulateness was always a joy, whether presenting news programmes or chatting *Round Britain Quiz*. Undeniably chubbable, he gave welcome signs of impatience at the prolix and the pretentious. I would have loved to hear him with David Starkey... or Daph... or Don... M.H.

There was the usual sprinkling of Rolls-Royces and red Italian open top sports cars parked casually by the Hotel de Paris. The spring sunshine did not stop the Italian women in very high heels walking in their furs arm in arm with their smaller husbands in dark glasses around the *casseroles*, the round flower bed with its fountain and palms in the middle of the *Place du Casino*.

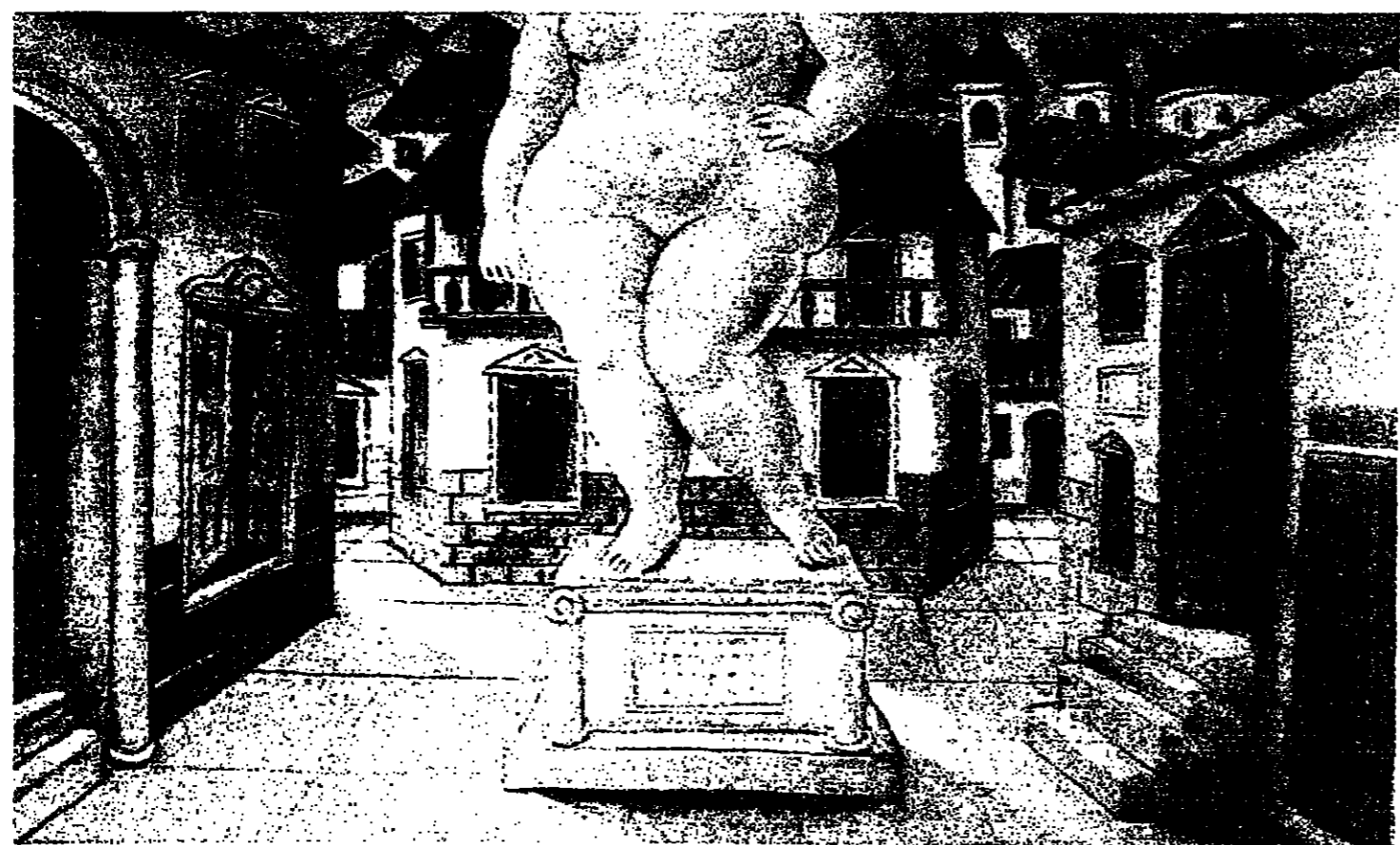
On the steps of the Monte-Carlo casino, supercilious doorman shooed away improperly dressed tourists. On the terraces overlooking the sea, a small crowd of Japanese visitors including a couple of Buddhist monks had gathered around a statue of two over-sized doll-like figures. They goggled, took snaps, and bent down to read the sign under the two huge figures with their blown out paunches and fat buttocks: Adam and Eve by Fernando Botero.

The works of the Colombian sculptor and painter, described by some as Latin America's best known contemporary artist, appear to have found a natural home in the tiny Mediterranean principality. There is certainly an affinity between Botero's surrealist world of obesity and grossly exaggerated forms and shapes and the at times surrealist atmosphere of Monaco.

For all its efforts to shake-off Somerset Maugham's famous wise crack - "a sunny place for shady people" - this postage stamp city state on the Riviera maintains an eccentric character of its own. Rich Italian tax evaders have largely replaced the English lords and Russian aristocrats. Formula 1 racing drivers and overpaid tennis stars have made it their home.

It is expensive, spotlessly clean and incredibly safe. It combines the sunny opulence of Beverly Hills with the atmosphere of a turn of the century operetta. It is minuscule (it would fit inside Hyde Park) but everything about it is exaggerated - just like Botero's sculptures.

The Colombian artist first hit the streets of Monte-Carlo four years ago when a gallery held an exhibition of his works in the casino gardens. Until a few weeks ago, a hugely fat Botero dog stood guard outside the *Café de Paris*. Fat peasant women and bloated men, all



Botero's designs for Donizetti's opera 'La Fille du Régiment' at the Garnier, part of the principality's efforts to enhance its presence in the international culture circuit

# Obesity placed centre stage

Paul Betts finds Botero's exaggerated sculpture at home in Monte-Carlo

ranked of course, sheltered under the shade of palm trees twinkling with fairy lights. The Colombian, whose works have also lined the Champs-Élysée and New York's Park Avenue, must have chuckled at the ironic humour of his statues blending in so well around the casino and laughed all the way to the bank. His works have fetched \$1m plus.

Now he has made it inside the casino itself, not the gaming halls but the charming *salle Garnier*, a mini replica of the grand Paris

Opera built by Charles Garnier. Botero has designed the sets and costumes for a new production of Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment*, the finale of the Monte-Carlo's opera's latest season and part of the principality's efforts to enhance its presence in the international art and culture circuit. The idea is to lure visitors by staging top class artistic events and not simply attract them with motor racing events, tennis matches, gambling, café society galas and what is euphemistically known as efficient tax management.

Botero must have had fun with this production. His universe of fat people crowded the small stage dominated in the first act by one of his huge nude statues. In the second act, the statue's two gigantic buttocks stared at the audience through an open window. All the characters wore heavily stuffed costumes disfiguring them into Humpy-Dumpy figures.

The overall impression was of a surrealist children's three dimensional pop-up book. But as the opera unravelled and the initial sur-

prise of the décor wore away, it all became more realist. Those blown out costumes began to look perfectly natural in the world of *bel canto* with its mighty tenors and sopranos.

It was also a way of rediscovering an artist who in recent years has tended to repeat himself by overworking a single successful theme. Like other artists, Botero has used an opera production to great effect to refresh his artistic universe. And Monaco could not have offered a better stage.

صورنا من الامم

ARTS

# Festival of two ghettos

Despite Abbado's attempts to make new music an integral part of Salzburg's Easter festival Andrew Clark finds 'museum' music for the rich and token modernism for the poor

A single red rose adorned the bust of Herbert von Karajan at Salzburg's Grosses Festspielhaus last weekend, and it spoke volumes. With his death seven years ago, a core of Europe's richest music-lovers lost their idol, and the Easter festival lost its centrepiece. It has never been the same since.

In the immediate aftermath of his death Karajan's reputation suffered a dip, but the balance is now returning in his favour. Unlike at the summer festival, mention of Karajan's name is not frowned on at Easter. Encouraged by photographic displays in the foyer and his widow's efforts to keep the name alive, the festival's old guard enjoys reminiscing about the Karajan era. Easter is their annual reunion - a way of keeping the flame alive in less propitious times.

Karajan knew what he was doing. With the help of the Berlin Philharmonic, whose services came courtesy of the German taxpayer, he fashioned the Easter festival in his own image. It had to be a private festival: Karajan wanted to be answerable to no one but himself. This makes life difficult for his successor, Claudio Abbado. Unlike Karajan, Abbado cannot bank on unquestioning loyalty from the public, so the festival's conservative audience now calls the tune. Elsewhere, cushioned by public subsidy, Abbado can programme as much Nono and Zimmermann as he pleases - but when people are paying a princely sum out of their own pockets, they do not want to be confronted with ugly modern sounds.

This explains the enormous discrepancy between the way Abbado talks about the Easter festival and what he actually programmes. In an interview in the festival book, Abbado says he aims to educate his audience by making new music an integral part of the festival. "This is the only way... to keep the festival alive. [It] must not be allowed to degenerate into a kind of museum devoted solely to the past."

This sounds both patronising and naive. The festival's contemporary music series, founded by Abbado and entitled Kontrapunkte (Con-

trapunkte), attracts fewer than 200 people per concert - mostly musicians, students and critics. You could hardly expect more, even if you paid people to come. The main festival programme, which brings in the money, continues to be devoted to the classical and romantic era, and there is no cross-fertilisation. The result is a festival of two ghettos - "museum" music for the rich and token modernism for the poor. Kontrapunkte is a well-meaning venture, but it is irrelevant to Salzburg at Easter.

Salzburg may not be everyone's favourite destination over the

**Unlike Karajan, Abbado cannot bank on unquestioning loyalty from the public so the festival's conservative audience now calls the tune**

Easter holiday weekend, but this year the sun came out, the tourist crowds were good-humoured, and festival visitors could take home a tiny bunch of musical snapshots: the opening theme of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, played to perfection by the Berlin Philharmonic's new principal horn, Stefan Dohr; the choral and orchestral storm at the start of *Otello*, brilliantly marshalled by Abbado; Frank Peter Zimmermann's choice of the fascinating Leopold Auer and Kreisler cadenzas in Beethoven's Violin Concerto; and the reluctant smile with which Bernard Haitink acknowledged the standing ovation at the end of his Easter Sunday matinee with the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra.

Nevertheless, it was a far-from-rosy festival. The Kontrapunkte concerts at the Mozarteum were devoted to Italian chamber music

from Verdi to the present - Abbado's idea being that the theme should tie in with the operatic centrepiece of the festival. But Italians have always thought of music more as a vocal than instrumental art, so this was never going to be one of the great Kontrapunkte series. It simply underlined the phenomenal effectiveness of Berio's music, especially when set alongside the output of his compatriots.

That judgment applies not so much to his Weberian string quartet of 1968, a curious piece of youthful homage, as to the *Sequenza* instrumental solos, dazzlingly played by members of the Berlin Philharmonic. These are modern classics. Berio's ear for musical theatre, and his mastery of the balance between form and content, have never been more convincingly demonstrated - especially in *Sequenza V* for trombone, a *tour de force* of musical suggestion inspired by a clown Berio knew in his childhood. Hermann Bäumer's performance was inspired.

But the orchestra's excellent chamber music ensembles could not mask the post-serial clichés of Franco Donatoni, Salvatore Sciarrino and other members of the Italian avant-garde. Worst of all was Donatoni's *Holly* (1990), a dirge of monotonal constructivism for cor anglais, oboe, oboe d'amore and 13 instruments. Why did Kontrapunkte favour composers like Donatoni and completely neglect Nino Rota? Because Donatoni's music, however arid, is politically correct; Rota's tuneful works are too "mainstream".

There were mixed pickings, too, in the symphonic concerts at the Grosses Festspielhaus. The best of the bunch was a Haitink programme pairing the Bruckner Fourth with Mozart's *Jeunehomme* concerto. In the latter, Murray Perahia provided a kaleidoscopic stream of colours and insights, awakening acute attention from orchestra and audience. Haitink's Bruckner was equally illuminating, because it was dynamic, taut and purposeful, combining seamless organic growth with a sense of vibrant architecture. It sounded like Bruckner's finest symphony, thanks to Haitink's extraordinary vigour

and the Berlin Philharmonic's tonal bloom.

Comparing this with Abbado's Bruckner Seventh the following evening was salutary: one wondered momentarily why the orchestra chose Abbado and not Haitink as principal conductor. There was none of the cumulative inevitability which marked out Haitink's approach. Too much phrasing and balancing was left to chance, and there was little sense of underlying tempo relationships. In the great Adagio, Bruckner's rising edifice wobbled like jelly, lurching forward one moment, retreating back the next. Abbado seems temperamentally unsuited to Bruckner.

*Otello* was equally disappointing. Perhaps Abbado was hoping that Ermanno Olmi would bring the same insight to Verdi's great Shakespeare opera as another film director, Andrei Tarkovsky, brought to *Boris Godunov*. It was not to be. Olmi's staging was static, monochrome and, in the Act 2 flower scene, soporily sentimental. Lucio Fanti's decor consisted of a stepped rock-mound, marooned like an island in the oceanic wastes of the Grosses Festspielhaus stage. It could have been made to work for *Tristan*, but it was an inadequate response to the fluctuating moods and settings of *Otello*.

The principals were left to fend for themselves. The big draw was Plácido Domingo, kitted out by Chloé Ohlensky more like a Spanish grandee than a Moor. He was announced as having a cold at Monday's performance, and at one point in Act 2 it looked as if everything might grind to a halt. But even in the earlier broadcast performance the voice had sounded uncomfortably tight, with all the isolated top notes missing. As for the acting - well, these days Domingo is much the same whatever he sings. It would have been preferable to remember him as one of the great *Otellos*, rather than be confronted by a cracked legend.

In such uninspiring surroundings, Ruggero Raimondi's Iago was subdued - though his stage presence was as strong as ever, and he peaked off the Act 1 *Brindisi* with a compelling mixture of Mephistophelian grandeur and vocal guile. Desde-



Plácido Domingo and Ruggero Raimondi in Ermanno Olmi's static staging of *Otello*

mona was sung by a promising young Italian, Barbara Frittoli, whose large lyric soprano goes well with her tall good looks.

But the real protagonist was the Berlin Philharmonic. In the more intimate passages, the lights in the pit tapered away to focus on small groups of musicians, and at the final curtain it was no surprise to find the orchestra taking the first bow.

Unchecked by Abbado, they

turned Verdi's music into an instrumental blockbuster, laden with dazzling brass *sforzandi* and deafening percussive flourishes. Perhaps the acoustical balance of the Grosses Festspielhaus is at fault (though it never seems to bother the Vienna Philharmonic); or perhaps the Berliners are too used to the spotlight to play second fiddle. Whatever the reason, it was alarming and distracting.

Gérard Mortier, director of the

summer festival, will be glad he turned down the chance to co-produce this *Otello*. Instead, it goes to Turin, and there is talk of reviving it at the 1998 Easter festival, followed by *Tristan und Isolde* in 1999 and *Simon Boccanegra* for the millennium.

The acid test of Abbado's policies will come next year with *Wozzeck*. With a staging by Peter Stein, and Bryn Terfel in the title role, how can the "Karajan pilgrims" say no?



'Trees in the Courtyard, British School in Rome': one of the drawings in an exhibition of work by the Financial Times' art critic William Peckar at the Pairs Feetham Gallery, 475 Fulham Road, London SW6 from April 19 until May 11.

## Oscar, Steve - and Doris

Now for some word association: if your instant response to "Oscar" is "Hammerstein", and "Steve" is "Hammerstein", you have probably already caught Mandy Patinkin at the Almeida in Islington. Patinkin is enormous on Broadway, and a cult hero, and the title, *Oscar & Steve*, sums up his act.

He comes up like a young Tony Curtis, chunkily handsome in a cheap black sweat-shirt. His prop is a chair; his support Paul Ford on the piano, and his business is the American popular song. But no, you have not been here before, many times. As soon as Patinkin opens his voice you know this is going to be different.

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His voice is a high reedy baritone, not unlike Al Jolson's, and his material is decidedly quaint - "Red, Red, Robin" and "The Band Played On" feature in the opening medley. But then suddenly Patinkin hits you - the voice drops a couple of octaves and he is draining every ounce of sentiment from the subtitle "If I loved you".

Patinkin, Broadway star of *Evita* and *Sunday in the Park with George*, highlights his two uninterrupted hours of entertainment with party pieces, "My Boy Bill" from *Carousel* and "Trouble in River City" from *The Music Man*.

You soon see the point of the old shirt: Patinkin sweats for us, he emotes for us, he strains every nerve for us. He sings with his body, as much as his voice. Sometimes he is twee - re-capping the opening of the show for latecomers - but not often.

His magpie approach to the music is endearing, switching from the Yiddish joke - "Cohen owes me \$97", an Irving Berlin song of 1918 - to the

re-assuringly predictable finale of "Somewhere over the Rainbow". In between is the totally unexpected: "Taxi", Harry Chapin's sad song of wasted dreams. He also makes audience participation seem almost like a good idea, with a spirited version of "Honey Bun". If you like your Broadway with balls, Patinkin's for you.

Anyone turned away from his sell-out shows might nip round the corner to the King's Head, where *Definitely Doris* provides more American music. This pretends to be the life and songs of Doris Day, Hollywood's virgin queen, who gave it all up to care for animals and to overdose on dusting. "Everyone has a hobby; I collect brooms". There is no quarrel with the songs, over 30 of them presented with reasonable panache by a five-strong cast, aided by piano and bass. It is hard not to sing along with such cheerful melodies as "Teacher's Pet", "Secret Love", and "It's Magic", evocations of sexual

innocence before the great fall. Production values are minimal although Patty Carver makes a fair fist of Doris and Lori Haley Fox has some sparkle some of the men look as if they have wandered into the wrong show.

But the life is another matter. While Little Miss Toothsome on screen, famous for never being without her nightie, Doris von Kappelhoff was ill-used by men over three marriages, her last husband leaving her virtually bankrupt.

Little of this gets across, the story line being largely based around her silly and sentimental fan mail. This is the comic strip Ms Day, a show created in the US where stars are treated with respect, summed up in their escapist music. Perhaps some time Doris Day's tippy-turvy life and successful career can be presented against a more realistic backdrop, the superficial gloss removed and the truth finally revealed about this surprisingly feisty and enigmatic woman.

Antony Thorncroft

## Conductor on the move from frigate to oil tanker

As 'Medea' opens in Leeds on Monday, Martin Hoyle talks to Paul Daniel about his work and forthcoming appointment to the English National Opera

As the train slows down and the civic spires rear in the distance, the sign says "Welcome to the promised land". Not this year in Jerusalem (though Verdi's *Jerusalem* was built here in its British premiere). As we are informed, in slightly more self-effacing pudor, this is Leeds.

"The fastest-growing city in Britain," says the loyal taxi-driver. The North West Yorkshire Playhouse is a relatively new institution and its predecessor, the Playhouse, was the result of lobbying that started only in 1968. And the Grand Theatre is the seat of the youngest of Britain's regional opera companies, Opera North, begun as a provincial outpost of ENO in 1978, and is now an autonomous, individual high achiever.

On Monday it takes a risk with one of opera's problem children. There are at least two versions of Cherubini's *Medea*, neither of which has enjoyed much success at Covent Garden, despite the presence of Callas in the Germanic overtly "operatic" version 35 years ago. A slimline (and disastrously thrifty-looking) production, conceived as one of the Royal Opera's cheap stopgaps, was booted a decade ago. One of the problems lies in the spoken dialogue - as originally intended - always a trap for opera singers and a potential hobble on the dramatic pace.

"It takes more work than singing - not because they're bad at it," the conductor, Paul Daniel, assures me. "It's just not given the time and weight it needs. There was a tradition of spoken rhetoric on the Paris stage and you automatically locked into it."

He reminds me that *Carmen* and *Faust* would later also be conceived with speech. "Most of them have recovered from the junk thrown at them - extra music, recitatives - throughout the 19th century." The pre-Napoleonic *Medea* (1797) fell victim to the treatment in about 1850 "which has gone in this production," says Daniel firmly. "Not that I'm a purist. I'm for the most perfect version possible. I'd love to admire a good production that used recitatives - like the Callas recording - but I just don't think they're right."

Especially as the performance is sung and spoken in English. "It takes it out of the museum case. It's the immedi-

acy of the piece that hits me. Cherubini was a jobbing composer and we're a jobbing opera company."

This particular job fields Dame Josephine Barstow in the title role, directed by Phyllida Lloyd, something of an Opera North discovery, with successful productions of Puccini, Britten (*Gloriana* came south to Covent Garden) and, emerging as a house speciality, Chabrier to her credit. The production side is important to Daniel. "I've never been involved in opera when it was not exciting. I was lucky to start in the 1990s, with David Freeman's *Orfeo*, not a bad

continental European operatic sausage-factory churning out assembly-line productions, like Munich."

Artistically, Daniel brings, in his mid-thirties, a vast operatic experience to the London Coliseum, unlike his predecessor, the musicianly Sian Edwards, who struck some critics as learning the opera-house routine as she did the job. Something of a Verdi specialist (he conducted *Jerusalem*), he ranges from Mozart to Berg, taking in the Russians (he worked on the translation of Dargomizhsky's *Stone Guest* with his wife, the soprano Joan Rodgers, when he conducted the British premiere at ENO in 1987). But when it comes to repertoire, "Your job is not to be a judge." He quotes Rudolf Kempe who brought talent to routine revivals of *Carmen* and *Butterfly* while remaining a superlative Wagner and Strauss conductor.

You feel Verdi is Daniel's idol, something of a problem, given that the British produce notable voices for Mozart, even Wagner, but not full-throated Italianate tone? "The other day, talking about whether a voice was going to be Italian or German, I concluded there was no difference - except that Italians train better. In terms of what we think of as tradition, some of the best Wagner voices are Italian-trained. I can't bear Wagner being belted, the kind of bull-worker tradition - 'I can exert more pounds per square inch than you.' I think Wagner should be more transparent than Puccini."

So what about Puccini, bread-and-butter of the rep? "Amazing. You care for his characters." Mozart? "Recently a soprano came to sing, not audition, just work in progress. Her Eva [*Meistersinger*] was very easy, but when she sang the Countess in *Figaro* it became apparent that if you're not touching base with Verdi and Mozart you can go seriously off the rails. For Eva, Puccini, you don't have to be completely fit. You have to be in absolutely top form for Amalia or the Countess. Like going back to the doctor for a check-up you go back to the classical repertoire - I count Verdi as classical too."

The mention of Strauss reveals someone not entirely converted. "The best Strauss is the shortest. The orchestral pieces are brilliant but as soon as it's more than half an

hour... Christoph von Dohnányi compares conducting Strauss with visiting a whore. It's exciting to think about, fun while you're doing it, but you feel ashamed afterwards."

We move quickly on to the contemporary repertoire. "I'm still devoted to the idea that one day we'll live in a culture in which a composer writes for the theatre and audience that he knows, where they know one another. It had been good enough for 300 years, until this century. We've done nearly a quarter of opera's lifetime without it. It's a bit worrying..."

Daniel has no desire to be a figurehead MD. Opera North, he maintains, provides an example of collective loyalty. "Here there's a sense of adventure, a sort of equality, where every point of view has the same validity. Some of our best ideas come from what in other companies would be called the bottom rung." He has one or two "babies" he regrets leaving up north, notably in the field of new orchestral commissions from young composers.

But he has no doubt that his departure from Leeds will, in the broad scheme of things, be as seamless as he hopes his arrival in WC2 will be. "Companies are wheels that go round and round. They don't stop for one person to get off and another one to get on. If it's a good company the wheel turns very positively, no slowing down, when you get off and someone gets on."

Pipe him aboard the oil tanker, and beware the rocks.

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TRAVEL

# Zanzibar: Venice without the canals

Stanley Stewart visits a remnant of a seafaring world

Zanzibar seems to belong to an atlas of the imagination, somewhere between Ruritania and Lilliput. Even the name suggests fantasy, less a destination than a traveller's mantra, sibilant and seductive. Say it often enough and carpets might fly.

But on the crowded quays of Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar was just another port of call. Passengers armed with suitcases the size of wardrobes were buying tickets from a row of boat offices.

In the bustle of departure I was carried aboard between a tearful woman and a man trying to interest me in his rubber stamp business. We set sail for Zanzibar through a harbour of rusting freighters.

By the time of its cameo appearance in *The Arabian Nights*, in the 9th century, the island of Zanzibar was part of a seafaring world in which Muscat, Mombasa and the Malabar Coast were tethered to one another by the trade winds of the Indian Ocean.

By the 18th century, when the Portuguese arrived, it was one of a chain of thriving East African coastal cities which bore little connection to the interior. Its religion came from Arabia, its traditions from Persia, and its luxuries from India and China.

Only a century ago its estates stretched from the African lakes to the Gulf and its rulers were courted by the crown princes of Europe. Today it is part of Tanzania, one of the poorest countries in East Africa.

From Dar, it is an hour's crossing on a sea decorated with dhows. From an upper deck I watched Zanzibar rise from the horizon: first the tipsy palm trees, then a patchwork of rust roofs and a line of bleached colonnades.

The porter who shouldered my bag on the quay was the descendant of men who had carried Speke's portable sundial to the sources of the Nile. He warned me about other porters, by his account a disreputable mob. It had a familiar ring. Stanley had so much trouble with his Zanzibar porters he hanged half of them.

The hotel was a cavernous mansion built by an Indian trader of the last century. The rooms were furnished with canopied beds and captains' chests. Downstairs the receptionist slept on embroidered bolsters, while beyond the shuttered windows a donkey rider had paused to buy figs from an ancient sage.

Like any island, Zanzibar is a secretive place. Crumbling Arab and Indian mansions overlooking the narrow lanes, their interiors hidden behind lattice screens and vast doors. Elaborately carved and studded with brass, doors are so important to the island's psyche that it is said they are erected first and the house built around them. Yet they are always ajar, the instinct for privacy is complicated by a native exuberance. Domestic life spills into the streets like cooking smells with its quarrels, children and gossip.

Zanzibar is Venice without the canals, quirky and idiosyncratic, full of surprises and odd turns. The nearest alley can

### Travel notes for Zanzibar

**Flights:** The author travelled to Africa with Lufthansa (0845-737747) which flies four times a week to Nairobi. Flares from 2365 return. Air Tanzania (002542-336224) operates onward flights to Dar es Salaam (032) and Zanzibar (034). From Dar es Salaam numerous boat and hydrofoil services reach Zanzibar in 75 minutes. Tour operators include Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600) which offers a week in Zanzibar from 5975.

**Accommodation:** The Reef Hotel (0025411471771), a luxury resort on the coast 10 minutes south of the town, has bungalows from £75. In the old town, Emersons House (0025554-30413) is recommended. Should you break your journey in Nairobi, the Norfolk (0800-181123) costs from £143 for a twin. In Dar es Salaam the Shepton (0800-353535) offers a rare oasis in a steamy city from £263. Tours of Zanzibar town and the island can be arranged through Madras Tours Safaris (0025554-33943).

**Guidesbooks:** *Guide to Zanzibar and Pemba* by David Bee (British Publications, £8.95) and *East African Handbook* (Trade & Travel Handbooks, £14).

**Other information:** Anti-malaria tablets should be taken. Vaccinations for typhoid, tetanus, meningitis and hepatitis A and yellow fever should be up to date. British citizens do not require a visa for Tanzania but are asked to obtain a visitor's pass from the Tanzanian High Commission in London (0171-491 3600).

open unexpectedly into a vista of balconies and pillared porticos.

Grand entrances can lead to dusty stairwells, divided tenements and the smell of fish. In the streets one still finds men in flowing robes and women in veils. In tall, shuttered rooms overlooking the sea there are still the clan loyalties, the whispered plots, the Byzantine intrigues of the harem.

In the 19th century any self-respecting African explorer came first to Zanzibar where the slave traders offered advice and porters for journeys to the interior. Burton, off to look for the sources of the Nile, was taken with its licentiousness. Livingstone, off to look for souls, was mesmerised by the place. Stanley, off to look for Livingstone, called it the Baghdad, Isfahan and Istanbul of East Africa.

The island remains a landfill for expatriates. It is the Casablanca of our day, a backwater where expatriate hoteliers and professional travellers can still enjoy cognac at a shilling a shot. At Emerson's House, a splendid hotel run by a wayward American, I dined with the proprietor on a rooftop of

cushioned divans. "Zanzibar is a hybrid," Emerson said over his malaria medicine, formidable gums and tonics.

"It's neither Arab nor African. Its ambivalence means that everyone feels it belongs to them." Breaking the jumbled roofscape of the town were a host of minarets, the spires of two cathedrals and the intricate facade of a Hindu temple.

On the sea front, next to the old Arab fort, stands the magnificent House of Wonders. Originally the Sultan's guest house, it contained the first lift in East Africa. It is now under renovation and I was disappointed not to get inside. A recent visitor reported seeing a collection of vintage limousines under cloaks of dust and the ballot boxes, still unopened, of the 1964 election.

Next door is the Sultan's palace, now a museum. The household furnishings neatly describe the decline of the dynasty. The carved Indian teak of earlier centuries suggests power and stability but once the Formica coffee tables and fitted wardrobes arrived in the 1950s, revolution could not be far behind.

It came in 1964, a few months after independence, carrying away the Sultan and the merchant classes. It is said that 17,000 Arab and Indian traders were massacred in a single night. The consequences were inevitable - economic stagnation, shortages and emigration. Within a few years, the only British colony to achieve independence with a surplus was an economic basket case.

From an upper balcony of the palace I gazed down into the royal graveyard where bitter rivals now lie side-by-side. Their history through the 19th century reads like a soap opera ghosted alternately by Dostoevsky and Jilly Cooper, complete with fratricide, blood feuds, chase scenes, narrow escapes and adultery in the banana groves. The last Sultan of Zanzibar sought refuge in England after the revolution where he retired, like a bank



Zanzibar is full of surprises and odd turns: the nearest alley can open unexpectedly into a vista of balconies and pillared porticos. Stanley Stewart

clerk, to the south coast. The home countries find an echo in the Anglican cathedral with its stained glass, memorial plaques and musty air of neglect. Erected on the site of the old slave market, its crucifix is made from the tree under which David Livingstone's heart was buried in Zambia. Livingstone's reputation is somewhat overstated. In nearly 30 years in Africa he only made one convert, and he lapsed.

But Zanzibar is primarily Moslem, and the mosques are

where the real religious action is. They pop up in the narrow lanes like corner shops, their doorsteps crowded with worshippers' shoes. After prayers the men sit outside and talk in an atmosphere reminiscent of a gentleman's club, minus the whisky.

Beyond the town, along the coast road between spice plantations and orchards of tropical fruit, lie the ruins of palaces. Royal households in this part of the world suffered from exponential growth, and one of the Sultan's more pressing

problems was where to put everyone. At Sultan Said's palace at Mtoni, the household was said to number more than 1,000.

Said built Beit el Ras Palace next door to accommodate the overflow: 75 official consorts and 120 children, plus servants. His son Sultan Barghash built yet another to house surplus concubines, said to number more than 100. Each had her own bath-house in which to entertain her master.

Back in Zanzibar town I retired for a sundowner to the

Africa House Hotel, the former British club adorned with emaciated hunting trophies, sepia photographs and a pair of canons in the entrance hall.

The British always had the best real estate, and the terrace of the old club enjoys the finest sunsets in East Africa. The lights of the mainland are too far to be visible.

On the darkening ocean, Zanzibar seems cut adrift from Africa, alone with the trade winds, a remnant of a seafaring world, belonging to no one - a traveller's paradise.

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### Check-In/Roger Bray

## Can Brussels aid air passengers?

New moves are afoot to ensure that scheduled airline passengers get their money back when airlines go bust. The European Commission is considering a scheme which would cover travellers throughout the community.

Britain, meanwhile, may jump the gun - but only to cover passengers buying cut-price tickets.

Under British and, now, European law, package tour operators are obliged to protect customers' payments by arranging for travel insurance or locking the money in an Escrow account.

Scheduled passengers are left to take their chances. The only way they can be confident of getting their money back is to pay by credit card.

Airlines usually rally round and provide seats at special rates for stranded passengers if a rival goes under. But while they may get seats at special, low rates, that still means the victims have to fork out twice.

This glaring anomaly has stood out even more obviously as deregulation of Europe's air routes blurs the distinction between scheduled and charter flights.

The Civil Aviation Authority long ago proposed to end it with a fund which would cover passengers flying from Britain, but British Airways did not like it and the government did not pursue it.

Now the CAA proposes that passengers buying seats at "unpublished" prices through consolidators - agents once known generically as bucket shops - should be protected.

Consolidators already need Air Tour Organisers Licences (ATOLs). As a condition of those licences they must put up bonds to reimburse customers if they - the agents - cease trading. But some have been refusing to accept responsibility when airlines go down.

The CAA argues that when customers see the Atol symbol, they automatically assume their money is safe. They are being misled, it fears.

Objectors to its proposal say

it would create an even dafter anomaly, with discount travellers protected and full price payers left to twist in the wind.

The sensible solution would be for Brussels to hack away the jungle and insist that everyone is treated the same way.

### Mont-Blanc renaissance

Memories of Jean Cocteau, polymath of the French *avant-garde*, are flooding back to the Hotel Mont-Blanc in Montreux, Cocteau's grandson Philippe is helping proprietors Jean-Louis and Jocelyne Sibuet to assemble a collection of Cocteau's lithographs and sketches, to be hung in the library.

The Mont-Blanc is enjoying its first year of renaissance after a root and branch refurbishment. In the 1950s, the original art deco hotel was so popular with the Paris arts world that it became known as the *21st arrondissement*, after St Germain-des-Prés.

It was there that Georges Braque, its then owner, described by one writer as *un jeune papillon de nuit*, had become transfixed by Cocteau and his contemporaries.

Roger Vadim first went there on a photo shoot with Lesley Caron and later used room 105 as part of the backdrop for *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* starring the young Brigitte Bardot. Jeanne Moreau occupied room 19 in *La Marquise de Merteuil*. Aiy Khan and Rita Hayworth stayed there. Cocteau painted a fresco in the restaurant.

In recent years the hotel had become run down. The Sibuet, a local couple who started by renovating the *Hotel Coin de Feu*, bought the Mont-Blanc just over two years ago and applied their imaginative eye for detail, introducing plenty of wood panelling and antique furniture.

In the reception lounge, where a lovely *tarte aux framboises* awaits hungry skiers or walkers, a line from Cocteau's *Les Enfants Terribles* is displayed

on a beam: "Style is a very simple way of saying something complicated."

On the trail of Jane Austen

Oscars equal tourists. When London's Docklands were digested as Vietnam for Stanley Kubrick's *Pull My Little String*, it seemed unlikely that any part of Britain would remain untouched by screen associations. The recent triumph of *Braveheart* in Hollywood appears to have taken the Scottish Tourist Board unawares.

It has not got around yet to producing a trail map showing locations where the film was shot and places associated with its hero, William Wallace. But Hampshire County Council anticipated the success of *Sense and Sensibility* with a booklet entitled - like it or loathe it - *Jane Austen Country*. Until May 6, the excellent family home at Chawton, near Alton, where she revised the manuscript, will display costumes from the film and from the television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Not to be outdone is Fishguard, south Wales. Its bay saw the climax of John Rus-

ton's 1956 version of *Moby Dick*. The town will celebrate the film's 40th anniversary and the centenary of cinema with an exhibition, comprised mainly of photographs of its making.

The whale will loom large in its absence, however. Several were made of tubular steel and rubber skin, and all are thought to have been lost at sea.

### A sharp jab in the wallet

A monodose means two injections and, while some general practitioners still provide it free, it can cost as much as £97. Confused? You will be if you need vaccination against Hepatitis A. Travellers can either go for the old gamma globulin protection, which gives two to three months' cover, or choose Havrix, made by SmithKline Beecham, which lasts 10 years.

Probably, there are two kinds of Havrix - the original triple dose, which has been superseded by the so-called monodose (one immediately, with a booster after 6-12 months). Although the manufacturers say they can still supply it on request, the last stocks of the triple are about to run out in Britain.

In many countries, however, the newer dose is still not available. These are believed to include Australia and much of Africa. The company advises that people making long trips to such destinations and who are there when they need the booster, should have the third of the triple dose. It will not last the full 10 years, but it will increase resistance.

As for price, some GPs charge a nominal amount. London's Berkeley Travel Clinic charges £90 for the monodose course (£10 for gamma globulin) and British Airways fee is £97. If you are contemplating going to a local doctor, get in quickly. Some medical experts believe it is only a matter of time before Havrix is no longer available on the National Health Service.

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Celebration  
lastic brick

سكان الاجال



TRAVEL

# Cordoba: once the greatest city in Europe

Adam Hopkins tries to imagine the vanished majesty of the Caliphs who ruled 1,000 years ago

**W**e took a room on the high hill to the north of Cordoba, looking down into the valley of the Guadalquivir, scruffy at this point with industry and a cliff-fall of apartment blocks to mark the city's edge.

Beyond, the hills rose once again in a green sweep, leading the eye into the mountains. The land between the city and the high sierra is cattle and cereal country, terrain of great landowners and Gipsies in jalousies.

"On a clear day you can see the Sierra Nevada," said Antonio Matas, our host, "all the way across into Granada."

At night, as we discovered, villages shone on the wide hills opposite like luminous fish in a dark sea.

His hotel, so Matas told us, was once a private house, about 100 years old. Having converted it, he named it al-Mihrab - the prayer niche of a mosque - in honour of Arab antecedents in these parts.

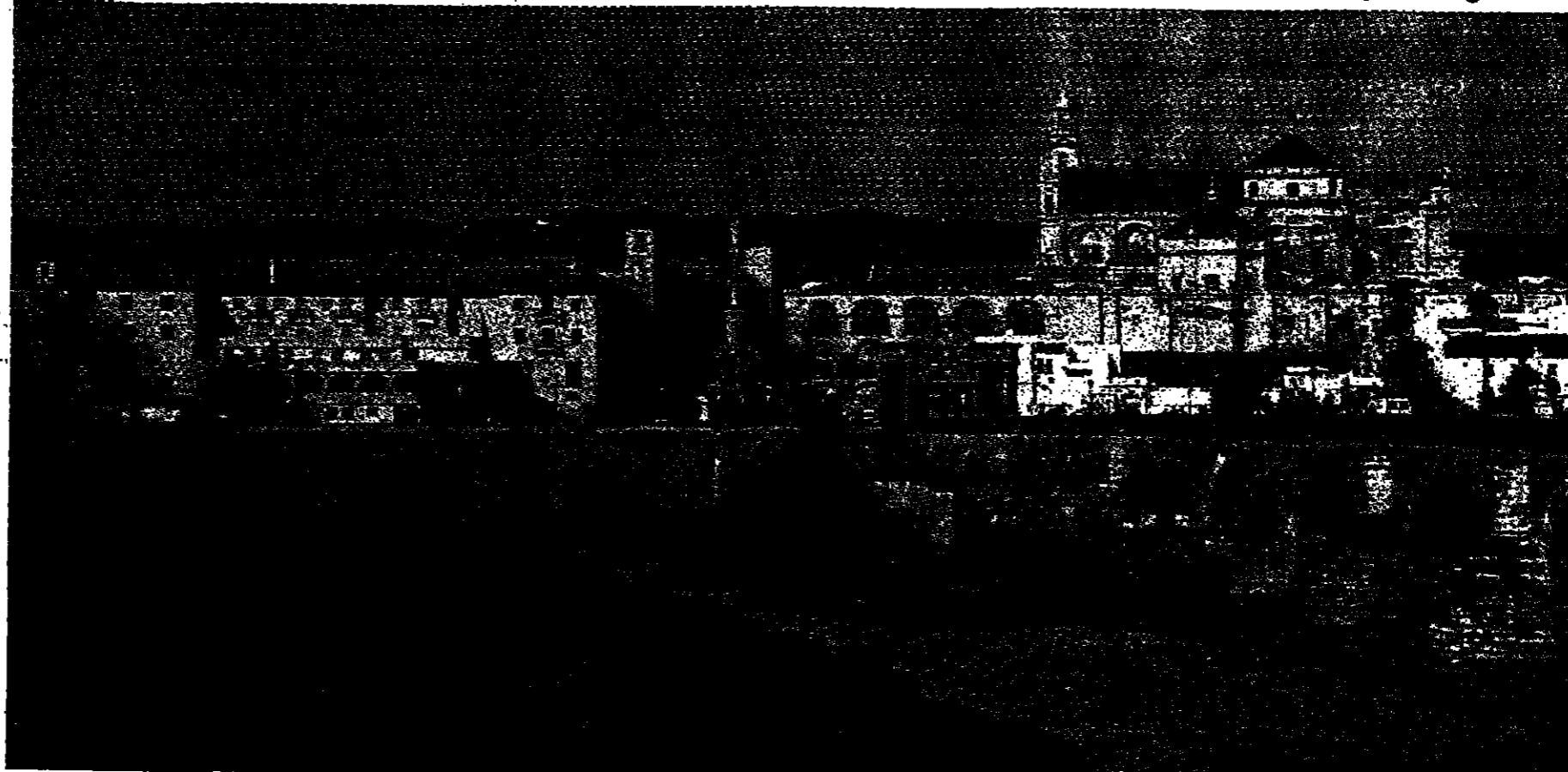
For Cordoba, of course, the former Roman capital of Baetica, had fallen into Moorish hands in AD711 and gone on to become, within two centuries, the greatest city in all Europe, centre of learning and the arts, science and up-to-date agricultural technique.

By the 10th century, Cordoba had its very own caliph, political rival to the big boss in Baghdad, and he ruled, except for Christian pockets in the north, the whole of modern Spain and Portugal.

Morning found us among the ruins of the caliph's palace, a few kilometres down river from Cordoba. The caliph's palace-city stood at the point where the descending sierra met - and meets - the flatlands of the valley, providing from its own descending terraces another triumphant set of views.

By name Madinat al-Zahra (Medina Azahara in Spanish), it was a huge affair, with military headquarters, slaves, harem and workshops, full of reception rooms with horseshoe arches and a vast garden, symbolising heaven. Embassies came from the Christian emperor in Byzantium; Madinat al-Zahra sent out its own missions as far as the Volga.

Christian kings arrived from the north, as well. One of them - Sancho the Fat of Leon - came in search of a cure for his obesity. He was treated by the multilingual Jewish doctor, and patron of poets, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, who acted as court translator.



Cordoba: once you have penetrated the ill-favoured outer shell, it is now so sweet and quietly pretty that it is hard to think of its great past

I mention this partly because Madinat al-Zahra - sacked, lost, found again, partly excavated and partly reconstructed - is a fine place for an outing. But it is also the case that Cordoba itself, once you have penetrated the ill-favoured outer shell, is now so sweet and quietly pretty, with its white lanes and geranium-filled patios, complete with fountains, ferns and gorgeous tilework, that it is hard even to imagine the vanished majesty of the caliphate 1,000 years ago.

But there is, as all good tourists know, one building in Cordoba which gives a clue. This is the Great Mosque or Mezquita; and here, maintaining tourist discipline, we eventually, circuitously, arrived.

The Great Mosque stands near the river bank where the Roman road comes into town across the many-arched Roman bridge. The mosque is low, roofed like a series of warehouses.

But within, of course - you must

at least have seen the photographs - it is an endless, centre-less series of slender columns, with red and white striped horseshoe arches rising over them, unbelievably flash, with a further set of arches rising over them again, for all the world like jockeys.

Shadowy, dashing, sombre, apt for prayer and meditation, and with some gorgeous mosaics - courtesy of the emperor in Byzantium - it is arguably the greatest building of early medieval Europe, preceding the Alhambra, not so far off geographically, by quite 400 years.

The mosque has probably survived because the Christians eventually built a cathedral in the middle of it, disrupting every internal vista. To get to it you have to walk through the poplar groves of the Islamic columns and under the red and white striped arches.

Technically, the whole building goes by the name of the Cathedral of Cordoba so that when you pay

your entrance fee, 750 pesetas, you are paying it to Mother Church. You can get in free, however, if you are going to morning mass, something I have done occasionally over the years, as much from curiosity as economy. Last time I went, there was a congregation of six facing a dozen priests.

But even if the Church's following is in decline, one powerful idea still lurks in Cordoba. This is the persistent belief that here, at least, in the days of Moorish rule, Islam, the Jewish faith and Christianity actually lived together in considerable harmony. In Spanish the word for this is *convivencia*.

We have heard that a museum dealing with *convivencia*, and featuring such oddities as talking statues, has been established in the magnificent tower of La Calahorra, where the Roman bridge touches ground on the far side of the river; and here, with mosque duties

done, we soon repaired. The talking statues talk all right, and go on for quite a while. They include the Jewish polymath Maimonides and the Moorish philosopher Averroes who restored the original, unnumbered thought of Aristotle and Plato to medieval scholarship.

Both were Cordobans; and quotations from their works, received by the paying public in many languages, certainly suggest a notion of mutual tolerance.

There are exhibitions on astronomy (the Moors were brilliant timekeepers and navigators), on Moorish irrigation and the Moorish doctor whose method of tracheotomy was used until early this century. It is a gimmicky, hi-tech kind of place, but impressive.

A well-known English architect, encountered by chance on the museum stairs, appeared to have had a blinding conversion while doing his round. "What a lesson for all of us this

is," he said, unprompted. "What a pointer for the future of the world." He was going straight home to his studio, he added, to redesign plans for buildings all around the globe.

It came as a real surprise to learn that the museum, right in the heart of Spanish-Moorish Cordoba, was the brain-child of a French philosopher - or so we deduced him to be from books on sale at the museum door. He happened to be in Cordoba; and yes, he would be glad to see us.

Roger Garaudy's house, for that was his name, was in the Juderia, the Old Jewry - the most characterful quarter of ancient Cordoba, epicentre of patios glimpsed through half-closed doorways, of round little cobblestones and stark white walls with iron grilles on windows.

There is a fragile synagogue built in Moorish style, a statue of Maimonides companionably seated, even a bullfighting museum, heaven help us, not to mention the excellent Bar Salinas, the best spot

in Cordoba for tapas, just by the Almodovar gate.

And so we came at last to Garaudy's house, entered by a typically Cordoban patio, to meet a vigorous old man, 82 years of age, with an extraordinary history. Marxist and Christian militant in France in the pre-war years, he had been caught by the Germans as a resistance activist and imprisoned, oddly enough, in the Sahara.

Here he led a rebellion of prisoners and was sentenced to death. But the firing squad, composed of Moslem troops, refused as a point of honour to shoot an unarmed man. This was his first contact with Islam.

We surmise from his talk - later confirmed by people who should know - that he was a gurt of France's intellectual left during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1970 the Communist party threw him out for being insufficiently Stalinist.

"I contemplated suicide," he told us. "It seemed that my life's work was wasted." Finally, in the 1980s, he turned to Islam. "But I entered the faith," he said, "with a Bible in one hand and Karl Marx in the other."

It was his deep belief in the possibilities of *convivencia*, experienced, we supposed, personally, that had led him to Cordoba to establish the museum in the tower of La Calahorra - helped by his friend, the communist mayor of the city at the time, Julio Anguita. He now leads Spain's national hard-left party, the Izquierda Unida or United Left.

"But we must look to the future," said Garaudy, waving us goodbye. "The next project is a manuscript library to be called 'The Memory of Andalusia', delivered on Internet. And the other idea that will be a Museum of Water, looking at both past and future."

We walked away into the Old Jewry, touched and impressed at the enduring power of the concept of *convivencia* in Cordoba.

On his recent tour of Andalusia, Adam Hopkins flew with Iberia to Malaga and back via Seville. Tel: 0171-800 0011.

For the three-star Hotel al-Mihrab tel: 00 34 51 2721982, or, in the UK, book via Travellers Way (01273-936791), from £27 a person a night d.b. There is also a (modern) parador in Cordoba, belonging to Spain's chain of state hotels. UK bookings and inquiries via Keytel (0171-402 8182).

## Celebration of plastic bricks

**A**t the controls of your Whirlybird model helicopter, 20ft in the air, you cannot fall to gup at the effrontery behind Britain's latest tourist attraction.

Not content with having created one of the world's best known consumer products, the Danish toy company Lego wants to boost its image, and global sales, still more with a chain of international theme parks.

Just in case anyone misses the link, Lego has thoughtfully provided four shops dotted around its new Legoland park in Windsor, west of London, crammed with the ubiquitous bricks and miniature figures.

It is certainly a fine marketing wheeze - but does it make for a day's entertainment?

The answer will depend on just how much of a kick you get from Lego products, sold in 120 countries and which provide revenues for the family-owned company estimated at £1bn a year.

That, in turn, is related to your age. The Windsor park - the first Legoland outside the original theme park in the company's home town in Billund, central Denmark, and which is due to be followed by up to 15 more over the next 50 years - contains few of the spectacular rides that other, more conventional theme parks have to tempt teenagers and people in their 20s.

The accent at Legoland is on gentle entertainment for children under 12.

Many of the park's attractions have a clear, though fairly subtle, reference to a Lego product. The park's central feature is Miniland, a representation of towns and villages in different parts of Europe and made from 25m Lego bricks.

The subliminal message from this impressive piece of work is that you can create your own Miniland in your bedroom - so long as you get your mum or dad to spend the necessary fortune on the plastic parts.

Whispering the appeal of its attraction, Lego has provided in Miniland a number of realistic railway networks, including a model Eurostar.

Pirate Falls, another part of Legoland which takes you on a boat ride culminating in a

sudden, extremely wet descent, involves a journey past dozens of life-size pirates and animals. They look familiar because they are larger versions of the Lego models available from shops.

The Whirlybird helicopters in another ride have the same simple, functional style as the pieces from the company's kits.

Perhaps the most powerful pieces of symbolism are remarkably lifelike models of birds, ants and butterflies - all created from Lego bricks - which festoon the "Enchanted Forest" part of the park.

Even the Spinning Spider, a fairly basic ride in which people sit inside large, teacup-shaped vessels and spin around, is "Legolised" by the addition of a huge, malevolent-looking spider made from plastic bricks.

It is while sitting on a ride like this that the enormity hits home of what Lego thinks it can achieve.

Try to imagine any other theme park built around a single consumer product, say a Sony Walkman, a Rolex watch or a Barbie doll.

Lego reckons it can persuade 1.4m people a year into its Windsor park - each paying up to £15 and coming from all over Europe - for what is an unstated celebration of its basic products. That says something not only about the variety of uses to which Lego bricks can be put, but the depth of their appeal to adults as well as children.

As though underlining this link between the infant and grown-up worlds, the most surreal image is a giant montage depicting the heads of three boys - made up, naturally, of Lego bricks.

This is remarkably similar in concept to a striking picture at the company's Billund headquarters, also made from bricks, of the three men, all from the Kirk Christiansen family, who have run Lego since its inception in 1932.

Legoland cost £85m to build, and is a mixture of solid Scandinavian planning and design that swings between kitsch and fantasy. Will it be a success? The verdict of my nine-year-old son was clear enough. He wanted to go back. We did not, however, buy any bricks.

Peter Marsh

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SPORT / OUTDOORS



Faidi George wasteful in his efforts to round the Panathinaikos defence



Steve Macmanaman: buoyant and positive

Baseball / Michael Carlson  
The Cuban connection

One way to follow the course of the stormy relations between Cuba and the US is through baseball. On the sporting scene, no two such diverse cultures could be closer.

Four days after the Cuban Air Force shot down two Cessnas belonging to Brothers to the Rescue, the Miami-based Cuban exile organisation, Livan Hernandez pitched for Florida Marlins in an exhibition against the University of Miami. The aircraft were allegedly searching for people defecting from Cuba to the US. Last summer, Hernandez defected from Cuba's national baseball team.

Only 21, 6ft 2in and weighing 220lb, Hernandez has the wide bottom and sturdy thighs of a power pitcher. In his official debut against the World Series champion Braves, he showed the poise of a veteran, throwing three innings and allowing only one hit.

"I'm just here to do a job," he said afterward. "I knew the Braves from TV, but I didn't approach them any differently from the University of Miami."

Five days later, he faced Toronto Blue Jays, in a game moved from the Marlins' spring training site in sleepy Melbourne to their normal home park in Miami. In spite of persistent rain, Hernandez drew 17,000 fans to Joe Robbie Stadium. He pitched four no-hit innings, and even hit a double himself.

CBS was there to give Hernandez his first national TV exposure. To watch the Cuban was the choice between America's freedom and Castro's slavery. In Melbourne, Hernandez had said as much to me. "I was looking for freedom, a good living for my family, and I'd reached my limit in amateur baseball."

But for Hernandez, the US is just a place to play baseball. He established his residency in the Dominican Republic, but he sought asylum in the US, he would have been forced into baseball's amateur draft, severely limiting his bargaining power.

The defections of Hernandez, and three other Cubans, were engineered by agent Joe Cubes. The Marlins wanted Hernandez because they needed to make an impact with Miami's huge Cuban community. "Playing in front of the Cuban people was something you just couldn't put a price tag on," said Cubes, although he managed to tag his client with a four-year contract worth at least \$4.5m, including a signing bonus of \$3.5m.

runs deep. American sailors brought the game to the island in 1866. When America's first professional league started playing in 1871, a Cuban was playing for Troy (NY) Haymakers.

The Marlins' Spanish radio announcers are both Cuban. Fero Ramirez broadcast Havana Sugar Kings' win in the 1989 Little World Series. "The expansion of baseball to Montreal - that franchise should have been in Havana."

"It was Castro's fault," adds his partner, Manolo Alvarez. Legend says the Cuban leader was scouted by Washington Senators. Alvarez scoffs: "Fidel pitched for the law faculty at the University of Havana. He couldn't make the varsity. He was a wild and crazy pitcher then. He still is!"

The Cuban love for baseball has not translated into support for the Marlins. But Tony Perez, a Cuban-born star now director of international relations for the team, sees that changing.

"They are very excited. They call the radio shows and ask about Livan." Is it a lot to ask a 21-year-old to rescue a franchise? "He can handle the pressure. He's used to big international games," he's got a guaranteed contract, and lots of support," says Perez.

"In my day, we were cannon fodder. We started in small towns where no one ever spoke Spanish. If we made it, fine. If we didn't, so what?"

Cubes felt "the best thing was watching Livan confronted with the American way". But when I ask how he relaxes, Livan gets stuck. He says he plays dominos with his Latino teammates. Then he blushes. "I watch Mexican soap operas on TV."

CBS hoped Livan might have a problem with the pre-game ritual of the US anthem. Baseball star Mahomet Abdul-Rauf had created a furor by not standing to attention. Hernandez handled it deftly.

"I am playing for an American team, so of course I respect their anthem. I will be Cuban till I die, but I'm only a sportsman. Politics and sports are different things. I don't want to mix them."

Everyone else does. Hernandez will be a drawing card and a symbol, like it or not. When Cuba's national team plays in Atlanta's Olympics, a flock of scouts and agents will hover, hoping to play the \$1m freedom card.

And Miami's Cubans, with their own star to follow, may start to appreciate the quality franchise in their adopted backyard.

As the European championships beckon, English football finds itself in an all-too-familiar dilemma: should it believe in the efficacy of its traditional virtues - pace, power, strength - to match superior technique, or should it try to play the "modern" way, spicing its muscular approach to the game with an exotic blend of uncomfortable formations and tactics?

In recent months, the national mood has lurched from unwarranted gloom to a frothy optimism that is equally unrealistic - a classic symptom of the inferiority complex that has clouded the English game.

First, the low point: when Holland produced that classic display of tactical sophistication to dismantle an over-ripe and uninspiring Irish side to clinch qualification for Euro 96, the doom-mongers in England were swift to make their presence felt. Here was the quick, clever football played by intelligent, mobile players which international success demanded.

There had been pitifully little sign of Terry Venables' team even getting close to this level of maturity. His side had been characterised by the selfless - and fruitless - running of Alan Shearer into the "channels" down the wings, a primitive, predictable move on which international

Soccer / Peter Aspden  
Desperately seeking the art in their feet

defenders thrive. Where was the comfort on the ball, cried the critics.

But it took the old Dutch maestro Ruud Gullit, currently proving almost as distinguished in the commentary box as he has been on the field, to give his compatriots a warning. He thought some of the Dutch play had been sloppy and complacent, stressing by implication the weakness of their Irish opponents.

I wonder if any listened. For there were signs in the Champions League semi-final first leg, between Holland's champions Ajax and the Athenian side Panathinaikos, that Dutch football is rather too ready to believe in its own - and other people's - hype. In short, Ajax made a terrible hash of things. Even allowing for the defensive stubbornness of the Greek side,

there was none of the improvisation and ability to surprise required to break down obstinate defences at the highest level.

Ajax seemed hamstrung by the very qualities which had had the commentators drooling just a few months earlier. Their endless, square passing was a picture of impotence rather than elegance; the quality of their crossing was non-league standard. Finally, they gave away the inevitable goal on the break. They face an intimidating obstacle indeed in the fanatical atmosphere of the away leg on Wednesday.

By coincidence, on the very night that Ajax's trendy young stars fumbled in Amsterdam, English football was rediscovering its self-confidence. The Premiership match between

Liverpool and Newcastle, with its irresistible flow and thunderous climax, was instantly hailed as one of the greatest ever played on these shores.

Here was open, fluent, brave football played by young men who were far from embarrassed by possession of the ball - indeed they all wanted it, all the time. There were classic strikes on goal, moments of high skill at fast pace, relentless attacking and a see-sawing sequence of goals which left crowd and managers exhausted.

Venables had good cause to smile. To take just one example, the contrast between England hopeful Steve Macmanaman, buoyant, positive, dipping his shoulder once, twice, three times on every thrilling run, and Ajax's Faidi George, cramped, inhibited and wasteful in his efforts to round the

Panathinaikos defence, could not have been greater.

But what lessons could Venables have taken home with him? He is surely too experienced a manager to think that the uninhibited style which both Liverpool and Newcastle favour these days will be emulated in Euro 96. Important tournaments are traditionally cautious, nervous affairs. Mistakes count heavily.

But in the form of Macmanaman, Robbie Fowler, Les Ferdinand and even the tireless Peter Beardsley, he surely saw glimpses of the confidence which is the cornerstone of team success. These players have enough art in their feet to disturb any defence.

It was sheer confidence, almost above all else, which characterised Paul Gascoigne's remarkable early performances in an England shirt. All talk of superior "continental" technique must be banished from the dressing room.

The same message comes from Gullit himself, who, in an interview in next month's World Soccer, criticises the English tendency to talk its product down. Venables now has a vital role to play as team psychologist as well as tactician. He must convince his players that English football can match any in the world - even if he cannot quite bring himself to believe it.

Road Test / Stuart Marshall  
Starlet Express

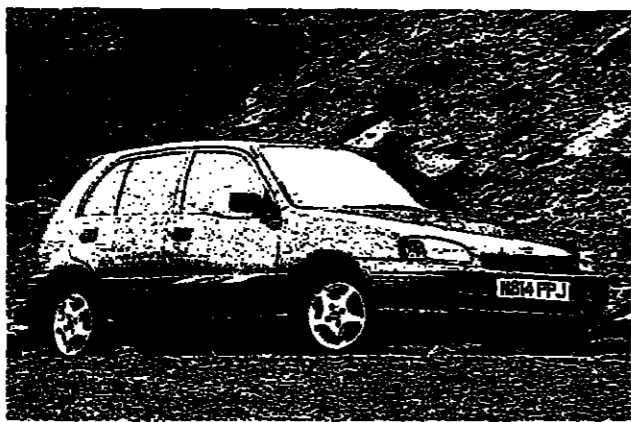
New small cars are arriving so thick and fast that it is difficult to keep track of them. These so-called superminis account for nearly 30 per cent of all European sales - and half are bought or used by women.

When men ruled the motor-ing roost, performance had a far greater influence than it does today. Buyers now take it for granted that any car, however small, will be able to keep up with the motorway pack.

They are more interested in ease of driving and parking, safety and security, economy and refinement. Also, of course, they want value for money, with entry models expected to cost around \$8,000, key in hand.

It has to be said that the new-generation superminis are more remarkable for their similarities than their differences. Probably the most sensible way to choose one would be to short-list those that look best to you, compare prices, equipment levels and warranty terms - and then squeeze the best trade-in price for your old car. It is a racing certainty that whichever one you choose will serve you well.

The latest Toyota Starlet, which I have just sampled in Spain and which goes on sale in Britain on Monday week, should be one of the most competitive in its class. List prices start at \$7,599, making the entry model three-door Sportif



The new generation power-steered Toyota Starlet Sportif five-door

almost \$1,000 cheaper than its old Starlet equivalent. There are three-door and five-door bodies and two trim/equipment levels. Sportif and CD (for which, in older times, read standard and de luxe).

The Sportif lacks the CD's sun roof, electric front windows, twin side-impact beams, tachometer and central locking, and none of the three-doors has height-adjustable front seats. But power-assisted steering, a \$330 extra on the entry model, is otherwise standard.

Every Starlet has a driver's airbag, \$6/40 split rear seat, remote fuel flap and tailgate release and, unusually, electric headlamp levelling. For the time being, there is just one engine: a notably smooth-running 74-horsepower, 16-valve, 1.3-litre from the larger Corolla range. It has been tuned to produce plenty of low-speed torque (pulling power), which came in handy on hills and in Madrid's fast moving rush-hour traffic. Care was needed to stay within the 75mph (120kph) limit, even on uphill stretches of motorway.

Fuel consumption should be

around 43mpg (6.7 l/100km) in average use. The standard five-speed gearbox is as user-friendly as you would expect Japanese manual transmission to be; a three-speed automatic is a \$700 optional extra.

There is nothing remotely sporty about the Starlet. This will worry typical buyers - retired couples as well as younger women - not one bit. They are more likely to be impressed by the Starlet's reputation, gained over many years, for utter reliability. It has been Toyota's most trouble-free car.

Around the straight-ahead position, the steering feels curiously dead. But the handling is safely predictable and the Starlet rides well on all kinds of roads, although tall drivers (and front passengers) would like the seats to push back further. Multi-coloured flashes on the body side protectors do nothing for the looks of what, otherwise, is a smart, well-proportioned and practical small car.

Prices of power-steered Starlets range from \$8,519 (Sportif five-door) to \$10,699 (CD, five-door automatic).

Gardening / Robin Lane Fox  
Flight of fancy

Time flies and we all wish that it did not. Nine years ago, the FT marked the beginning of my small grand plan for a series of avenues in the garden by printing an appropriate cartoon. The plan was to imitate the old French tradition of five avenues, radiating outwards like the points of a goose's webbed foot, what used to be known as a *potée d'oie*. We printed a picture of geese heading into the distance, each holding bits of designer string in its beak.

Nine years later, where have they gone? Results are not unimpressive and deserve more than a congratulatory quack. It is certainly possible to end up with a notable *potée d'oie* after seven years, but you are more likely to do so if you avoid the mistakes I have made along the way.

One is visual, one is horticultural and one is best described as sod's law. The visual mistake is to choose too many different varieties of tree. There is little advice on the matter because the designers of these old schemes were more interested in geometry than plantsmanship. I opted for a central avenue of hornbeam, two adjoining avenues of flowering pear and two outer avenues of the finely berried Sorbus Joseph Rock. I was most confident to end up with the Sorbus but it has turned out to be the main impediment.

Planters of these formal avenues should choose two types of tree at most: one for the central avenue, one for the other four. Otherwise, the contrast of leaf, shape and size are too distracting. No sooner had I planted 50 expensive Sorbus than I heard an apocalyptic lecture at the RHS. The speaker said Sorbus Joseph Rock was a big health risk and would attract firelight into every garden in south England by the early 1990s, spreading it to all forms of fruit tree.

These forms, I concluded, would embrace my flowering pears and so I returned home

and removed all but two of the Sorbus. Anyway, their leaves were too distracting in a scheme of two other dominating types of tree.

Since then, the surviving Sorbus have grown splendidly and show no trace of firelight. I am, however, glad that I replaced them with flowering pears so that four of the five avenues now present a uniform type of leaf and branch. I urge future imitators to exercise similar restraint but I would be even more glad about my results if the nurseryman had provided me with the same type of pear in their various consignments.

Three rogue trees have intruded, ultimately from Belgium, none of which resembles its neighbours. Always make sure that your trees derive from a single source and are guaranteed to be uniform.

Pears now predominate and, although I picked their variety from a book, I recommend it unreservedly for the purpose. I chose *Pyrus Chanticleer*, which is said to have glossy green leaves, snow-white flowers in spring, an upright habit, a long season and excellent autumn colour.

I was enjoying my 70 Chanticleers in their third season when a distinguished fellow gardening correspondent told me at the president's lunch at Chelsea Flower Show that they were a beastly sort of tree with a stiff, ugly shape. I have been waiting for the ugliness to develop but I think that he was generalising and forgetting the use to which I have put them.

Their upright shape, like a small poplar, is ideal for an avenue where they are spaced about 3 yards apart and clipped once each spring. They respond well to clipping and after year five, their top growth thickens and loses the rather



Pyrus Chanticleer: upright and ideal for an avenue

Garden Picture Library

course suckering appearance which might otherwise put you off. They then improve and do, indeed, give you 10 months of interest for very little effort.

The shows of white flower have appeared in late January in mild winters but have only just opened in this late spring. The leaves have a shiny coating which reflects the sunlight most prettily as the summer advances. As a result, the avenues are never dull and tired and in November they turn the colour of an old-fashioned academic colleague long enhanced by decades of port. *Pyrus Chanticleer* is now more than 20ft high and a resounding suc-

cession in avenues which are about 60 yards long.

The central hornbeams are also successful but they have one more serious disadvantage. I bought the best-known *Fastigiata* form, expecting that it would grow vertically and not try to bush sideways with an overpowering girth. Actually, only half-tree to its title. Mature hornbeams make wide-spreading canopies like a broad lollipop and the so-called upright form can be similar.

Every May, I have to clip mine quite hard to stop them losing the outline of an upright

exclamation mark. When clipped, they are satisfactory, although their leaves are a very strong lime green when they first open and are slower to appear than the more muted foliage of the pear.

Since I planted them, a truly upright hornbeam has crept on to the market called *Carpinus Betulus Columnaris*. I have added one or two specimens to watch their progress and they are certainly thinner and more vertical.

I am, thankful, at present, that I did not choose them instead of the common variety because they seem to be slower growing and need to be spaced more closely. On the long view, however, they would be a sensible choice, although stocks are still small and the only two suppliers could not furnish a rush of readers' avenues.

The net result of this experiment is that I have three highly impressive avenues, one of bulging hornbeams, one of glistening pears, and by 1998 I will have two more mature avenues of the same pear which will have replaced the Sorbus.

I can already see that the effect is so bold that it draws the eye away from the acre or so of flower-gardening in the foreground, and sometimes this distraction is a mercy.

Anyone who has a garden which slopes away from the eye and runs off into an expanse of wild, open grass should consider an avenue-pattern, whether or not the five-fold scheme of an expensive goose-foot appeals to them. No doubt, mine will catch firelight in time for the millennium but meanwhile I have to pronounce it a success.

Maybe geese like to eat pears but my sham goose-pattern does not produce proper fruit. *Pyrus Chanticleer* has many virtues as a clipped avenue but the production of soft, sweet fruit is unfortunately not one of them. To be fair, somebody would have to pick them and as they rise steadily to the sky, harvesting would be a real problem.

What's on in the principal cities

MOTORS

BMW 750iL-94 55k miles. All extras. Superb V12 engine. Stunning four new alloys. A future classic car at 17k price. £27,000 ono. 01922 833003 0802 150000.

Objectors to its proposal say Les Enfants Terribles is carved... AVAILABLE on the National Health Service.

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INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

What's on in the principal cities

AMSTERDAM

AUCTION Sotheby's Amsterdam Tel: 31-20-5502200... 19th Century European Paintings...

ANTWERP

CONCERT De Vlaamse Opera Tel: 31-3-2336808... 3rd Act of the opera...

ATHENS (USA)

EXHIBITION Georgia Museum of Art Tel: 1-706-542-3255... Tiffany Glass from the Collection...

BARCELONA

CONCERT Palau de la Música Catalana Tel: 34-3-2681000... José Carreras accompanied by pianist...

BERLIN

CONCERT Konzerthaus Tel: 49-30-203090... Moscow Soloists with conductor...

BOLOGNA

OPERA Teatro Comunale di Bologna Tel: 39-051-529901... Fedora by Giordano...

BIRMINGHAM

CONCERT Symphony Hall Tel: 44-121-2123333... Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra...



From the Onassis auction in New York: Hellenistic Polychrome Terracotta Horses, 3rd century BC

with conductor Neeme Järvi performs Sibelius' Symphony No.7 in C...

BONN

CONCERT OPERA Fundation Juan March Tel: 34-1-4354240... Tom Wesselmann: retrospective exhibition...

BOSTON

CONCERT Boston Symphony Hall Tel: 1-617-266-1492... Boston Symphony Orchestra...

BRUSSELS

OPERA Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie Tel: 32-2-2912000... Peléas et Melisande by Debussy...

CARDIFF

CONCERT St David's Hall Tel: 44-1222-878444... Welsh National Opera's 50th Anniversary...

DRESDEN

OPERA Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden Tel: 49-351-49110... La Cenerentola by Rossini...

DUBLIN

CONCERT National Concert Hall - Geórgias Násáidanta Tel: 353-1-788888... Herbie Hancock Quartet...

DUSSELDORF

CONCERT Tonhalle Düsseldorf Tel: 49-211-8992081... Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra...

EDINBURGH

EXHIBITION National Gallery of Scotland Tel: 44-131-5568921... From Bruegel to Rubens...

Dyck, De Crayer and Jordans for huge numbers of religious works...

GLASGOW

CONCERT Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Tel: 44-141-3226833... Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lambert Orkis...

HAMBURG

OPERA Hamburgische Staatsoper Tel: 49-40-351721... Il Barbiere di Siviglia by Rossini...

HELSINKI

OPERA Opera House Tel: 358-0-403021... Tosca by Puccini...

HOUSTON

EXHIBITION The Menil Collection Tel: 1-713-525-9400... Georges Rouault: exhibition of works...

LISBON

CONCERT Grande Auditório de Fundação Gulbenkian Tel: 351-1-7935131... Orquestra Gulbenkian...

LONDON

CONCERT Barbican Hall Tel: 44-171-6388891... Anne-Sophie Mutter and Lambert Orkis...

OSAKA

CONCERT Festival Hall Tel: 8-231-6885... Kyoto Symphony Orchestra...

LOS ANGELES

EXHIBITION The J. Paul Getty Museum Tel: 1-310-459-7611... Ten Centuries of French Illumination...

18th century. It includes richly illuminated scriptures, liturgical and devotional books...

MADRID

EXHIBITION Fundación Juan March Tel: 34-1-4354240... Tom Wesselmann: retrospective exhibition...

MUNICH

CONCERT Philharmonie im Gasteig Tel: 49-89-4809825... Münchner Philharmoniker...

NEW YORK

AUCTION Sotheby's Tel: 1-212-606-7000... Property from the Estate of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis...

NEW YORK

CONCERT Alice Tully Hall Tel: 1-212-875-5050... Anne Sofie von Otter...

VIENNA

CONCERT Konzerthaus Tel: 43-1-7121211... Camerata Academica...

WASHINGTON

CONCERT Concert Hall Tel: 1-202-467 4600... Israel Philharmonic Orchestra...

ZURICH

CONCERT Tonhalle Tel: 41-1-2083434... Brindl Quartet...

Freiburger Barockorchester: with conductor Gustav Leonhardt perform works by Zelenka...

ROME

CONCERT Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Tel: 39-6-3611064... Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie...

SAN FRANCISCO

CONCERT Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall Tel: 1-415-394-6000... Anne Sofie von Otter...

STOCKHOLM

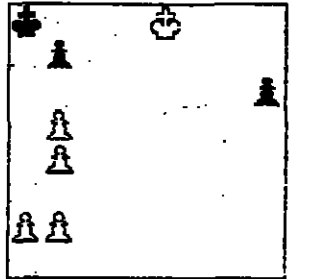
CONCERT Stockholm Konserthus Tel: 46-8-7860200... Kungliga Hovkapellet...

SYDNEY

CONCERT Concert Hall Tel: 61-2-250-7111... The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra...

CHESS

Many chess writers counsel against opening traps on the grounds that easy wins encourage a superficial approach...



White to play and draw. This endgame by G. Kasparyan, a renowned Armenian composer...

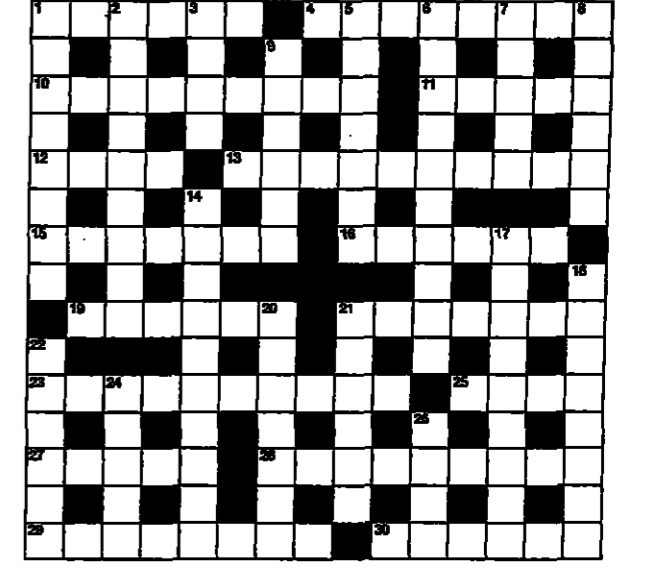
BRIDGE

A double game swing occurs on those rare occasions when a team scores game at both tables on the same deal...

At one table, North opened one heart, South made an artificial one-round force of one no trump...

CROSSWORD

No. 9,042 Set by DINMUTZ A prize of a classic Pelikan Souvenir 600 fountain pen...



ACROSS 1 Gold pieces in eye-sockets (6) 2 Telling of one term from another? (9) 3 Steady, brisk pace of David Copperfield to Aunt Betsey...

ADAMANT ARBITER HAPPY GOLDFINCH A L A M E A A I R U M B E R L A N D I C I O N G L E A S E I S I N G P I N N A A I R S P A C E A I I C E I I E R H A C K I N G W E A R M I N I G T O B L A N D E R R A C E C O U R S E W E A R U N D R A B B E T T E M E D S D A R K I S O T T O I N G N O T I C E I T E L E T O G H A I N T E R D O W N R I G H T S N O W F A L L I N P U T P I A E M E R D I N W A U E U N R I O R D I N A N C E E R A T O A N D I R O N Y I E L D O R R A C E S N U T V I T O C E S C A E A W H M A L T I E S E T I B E R I U S S I A K I C H A M B E R W I N N E R S 9,042: Keith Collier, Wantage, Oxon; R. Fryer, Crail, Pitt; P.J. Hadoulis, New York; Paul and Susan Colman, Bathurst, Herts; P. Pakenham, London SW2; M. Djemogly, London N2



James Morgan

# Jobs ain't what they used to be

Reform in the labour market will give rise to powerful losers and some unimpressive winners

The operation of the labour market today rarely disappoints those who do well out of it. The unhappy employment scene in Europe has promoted political stability and ministers often keep their jobs for a decade or more.

They commend those who acquire what they call a "portfolio of jobs", which is fine if your portfolio includes a visiting professorship, part-time consultancies and writing best sellers. If it should comprise packing supermarket bags, driving unlicensed cabs and helping blood-stained car-wreck victims into accident wards, life will seem less attractive.

They also say the job market today is like an actor's career - short-term engagements and no repeats. But 90 per cent of actors are out of work.

The much derided European model represents a successful attempt, on the part of the employed to fight the trend. A French paper wrote last week:

"Europe offers a framework where one may have less fear of the future." In a study last year for the Centre for Economic Policy Research, a French economist, Gilles Saint-Paul, noted that this employment model is designed to achieve political stability, not equity as its proponents like to believe. The labour market is organised so that up to 90 per cent of the labour force prospers and can expect to be quite well cared for in the event of losing a job.

Any reform will give rise to a powerful coalition of losers and a rather unimpressive group of winners. The lesson is that European rigidities are what keeps nations together. In the US, on the other hand, these rigidities are absent as

is the European sense of national cohesion. Saint-Paul believes social breakdown has been avoided by creating a political system in which the poor do not vote and in which political parties that might have articulated their interests have been made illegal.

It might be noted too that the US has few institutions to mediate between the citizen and the central government. No social partners, no unified education system, no national health service. The federal structure permits 50 states to go their own way in areas where other countries have single administrations. The states can act as social laboratories. Since there are few "national" structures, the US is not weighed down by a myriad institu-

tions which have outlived their usefulness. All other successful societies eventually fall prey to the systems which once ensured their success. German consensus provided the driving force for reconstruction, it has now become an end in itself and an obstacle to necessary change.

The dynamic "tiger" economies boom today because they are building on nothing. But, though we cannot see it, they are also building their own traditions which will eventually have to be chucked out while older statesmen, and their electorates (if any) noisily ask: "What would Lee Kuan Yew say?" It is very easy for them to be flexible at this stage of their development.

Britain went through a series of crises this century which gave a false impression of the relative success of its national institutions. The smashing of these institutions in the 1980s occurred under a government which relied more than most on a nationalist credo. Thus national cohesion was more or less sustained even while the structures which once underpinned it were dismantled.

In the rest of western Europe the rigidities have been reinforced. They will remain in place so long as most people benefit from them. And they still do. That is why, as Saint-Paul points out, labour markets remain unreformed.

James Morgan is BBC World Service economics correspondent.

## Peter Aspden Life is no exam paper



Imagine that you are a teenager once more, and that you have to face the appalling prospect of a three-hour written examination. It shouldn't be too difficult. I know my

sub-conscious is not alone in throwing this delicate torture into my dream world about once a month, and I fret and sweat through the night unable to sharpen my pencil because my fingers are made of chipolatas and the baguette is playing the piano too loudly to concentrate.

But imagine you are there, nervously turning over your examination paper when the gong sounds. You are relaxed, confident. But which question would you rather be answering: one which asked you to discuss the use of landscape in Florentine painting of the Cinquecento, or one which demanded an analysis of fictional company accounts for the financial year just ended?

Art or business? Beauty or commerce? Useless knowledge versus life-training skills? Intriguingly, last month's report by Sir Ron Dearing, on 16-19 year olds' qualifications, listed both art and business studies as among the "easiest" A-level subjects to take. Don't ask me about his methodology because it takes up 14 pages of appendix space. (For the record, mathematics, physics and chemistry were the most difficult.)

This is intriguing, because these two subjects represent the opposite ends of the educational debate spectrum. When we ask why we educate our children, we are likely to come down for one or the other. Art: we teach them the intoxicating effects

It does not matter what you teach: what matters is how you go about it

of beauty, in the hope that it will have a civilising, humane effect; or business: we teach them useful skills so that they will be better able to find a job.

Aesthetics versus utility is always an awkward argument to evaluate. There are times in a society's life when one is collectively prized far above the other. When Margaret Thatcher was stiffening the sinews of the body politic during the 1980s, for example, education-for-its-own-sake was put firmly on the defensive. "Relevance" and "contribution to the economy" became the buzzwords; to take three years (or even more) to complete a thesis on Titoretto's palette was considered frivolous in the extreme, almost decadent.

But there was dissent. Was not the word "education" based on the Latin *educere*, to draw out? Was it not important for students to receive a broad, humanistic infusion of cultural values so that they could play their proper role in society?

The dissenters' message went largely unheard. Scholastic heresies abounded: universities which lacked a department of philosophy revelled in the expansion of their centre for tourism studies. This was the new realism: equip the young for employment, and the search for truth can go hang itself on its own twisted semantics. But if the jobs aren't there?

British education, particularly at university level, still finds itself locked in this dilemma. But in truth, it does not matter what you teach: what matters is how you go about it. No subject should be taught in an uncritical vacuum, divorced from its context. Art should be assessed in terms of art markets, as well as its own intrinsic worth; business should always be studied with regard to possible alternatives.

That is how we produce a graduate who is both informed and critical: the type of person industry screams out for.

But there is a problem. A friend who is a professor of accounting and finance goes to great lengths to make sure his course is sufficiently rigorous, offering papers in critical accounting and making sure his students understand exactly how accounting and auditing systems are devised and structured. None of these papers, they want to do the minimum required to pass their examinations. They want to become chartered accountants as soon as possible. They simply want to know how to do the job. The phrase "Marxist critique" sounds to them like a sad relic from ancient history.

When we sit down with that blank sheet of paper in front of us and just three hours to put down everything we have learnt, perhaps it really is unwise to think too much. But life is not an exam paper, and we would all be better equipped if our heads were filled with more irrelevant nonsense.

Interview

# The MP with Anglo-German ties

Leading Eurosceptic Bill Cash explains his view of Europe to Cordelia Becker

William Cash MP is an experienced Eurosceptic, an outspoken opponent of the Maastricht treaty and said to be suspicious of all things German. How would he react to a German journalist entering his home territory - the central lobby at Westminster?

He quickly spotted me and led me energetically towards the crowded House of Commons tea room, where I was to conduct my interview. He immediately started talking.

We found a table and Cash squeezed his 6ft 4in frame behind it, ordering sandwiches and tea. With his grey hair, brown spectacles, gold signet ring on the small finger of his left hand and striped grey suit, he looked every inch a friendly bank manager. Certainly, he seemed very British to me.

He had become so famous that his wife Biddy, who manages his diary, could only get me an appointment for tea. The British custom suited him.

He continued talking and I found it a relief that he clearly did not mind discussing his alleged hatred of Germans with a German journalist. He has been quoted as saying such things as "I do not want a German Europe", and has made speeches against "Germany's bold masterplan" and its "self-interest".

The MP for Stafford never minds talking. He proudly mentioned the 240 amendments he has proposed in the Commons and told me: "I voted 47 times against the Maastricht treaty - more than anybody else." In 1991 he was "offered a little job to silence me". He refused and has fought since against the influence of the European Union.

I hardly had time to ask what he meant by a "German Europe", when he swiftly moved on to his favourite topic. "Kohl will create a greater likelihood of nationalism through Europe," he lectured.

I poured the tea for us which seemed to please him. "Germans do not want to lose the D-Mark," he stated, leaning back, now relaxed. I used the second in which he drew breath to remark that Kohl actually favours the euro. "Well, they would still rule it," he claimed. "Germany has been telling the other countries what to do."

Cash feels there is a difference between Germans and their politicians. "I think German people have a far more down-to-earth view than their politicians. The politicians would make sure that European interests equal German interests."

Then he was back on the Maastricht treaty - "an object lesson in not listening" is one of his descriptions.

I asked him why a federal Europe would be so evil. "Federalism does not work." But it works fairly well in Germany and was generally supported by the people, I pressed. "It's only within the framework of a



Bill Cash: 'Maastricht is worse than Versailles'

party list system," Cash retorted.

He became international. "It had not worked in Canada... the single currency didn't prevent the civil war in the US... The Maastricht treaty is a human political experiment that creates a kind of Frankenstein." And he was back on to Germany.

Cash once said the second world war had the strongest impact on his political beliefs; his father died near

Caen in 1944. I asked him if he saw Kohl as a new emperor. "His destiny is a political union," he replied.

He said he did not want to question Kohl's motives but he seemed to have no objection to describing what he saw as typical German features: "Very logical, on the whole hard-working and efficient. They do not have the same democracy" (now he talked faster, back in safe waters) "of open debate and discus-

sion. There is a difference in the political procedures. The German system is much weaker, German democracy is much more shallow. It is fundamental to Europe that the British system survives."

The waitress resumed me, offering a tray of neat little cakes. Cash chose Battenburg cake, interrupting his flow only briefly: "I spoke to Tietmeyer for two hours in private." A list of more or less important

German celebrities then followed before he returned to his favourite topic.

"We must renegotiate the Maastricht treaty to save Europe from chaos... Versailles they fiddled, this they can't. Maastricht is worse than Versailles, as it turns out."

With mouth still full of Battenburg, he added: "I fear for Germany." Cash moved on to his latest 40-page paper which he had just fin-

ished. "You must read it, I ask for no more than that," he said gesturing with both hands.

When he was called to the phone, I took the chance to rest my hand, exhausted from taking notes. On his return, he repeated that Germany would be the only country pressing for Maastricht.

Meanwhile, we shared another pot of tea. This time, he poured the milk. Then he talked about fears within Germany - about Turkish immigration, unemployment, pension funds. "The EU is a complete example of contradiction driven by theory," he concluded.

Cash's metamorphosis from an acknowledged pro-European to the leader of the Maastricht rebellion posed a question. Was it to gain popularity, as some had suggested? "That's laughable. That's a joke."

But he was not laughing. Indeed, he was angry. Before he could portray another picture of a disastrous united Europe, I asked how much money he and the European Foundation, an institution founded by him to campaign against Maastricht, spent. He did not know "for obvious reasons".

He explained: "There are four employees and three volunteers in the foundation." He added: "We do have access to some very fine brains."

So did he think the British system was the right one for Europe?

"The British model with some modifications, yes. Party lists are good, but the whips system is too strong." At that point, it became clear to me that his love for Britishness more than anything else fuelled his rebellion.

"I say what most people in the Conservative party think," he assured me. "The only thing I have is my determination and my political will." Of which he has plenty.

I asked him to sum up his point of view. "Trade is fine, giving away sovereignty is not."

One of his favourite sayings was: "I'm just a backbencher." This leaves him at least four hours a day to campaign against Maastricht. Still, he considers himself to be a good European. "Being against a political union is positive for Europe. I'm being pro-European," he assured me.

I commented on his bright red braces and he smiled and proudly pointed to the label on his tie: Otto Kern, a German brand. Cash said he bought another tie in Hamburg. Every time he went abroad he would buy a tie. "I also have French and Spanish ties."

I asked if he thought himself to be a typical British conservative.

"Yes, I'm very typically English. I live in an Elizabethan manor house and have traditional interests," he said proudly. He mentioned that he was a Catholic and a good European.

Then he pointed out his strong German connections, this time concerning his property.

"The ambassador from Hannover lived in my house. Prince Rupert of Rhineland stayed there. You can't get a closer British-German relationship."

occurring naturally in the brain and having pain-relieving properties" (Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary).

There you have it. Endorphins are responsible for the free and legal high you get from overdosing it. And judging from all those stories about health club fitness freaks, their broken marriages and lost careers, they are pretty addictive substances.

It is time the government's chief scientific adviser was consulted. Are there no little research outfits in Edinburgh which could put the facts before us? No doubt our ministers would suffer a slight temporary loss of popularity for alerting the nation to the risk. But they are used to that.

Someone must have the guts to speak out against this virulent hysteria which is undermining the physical and moral fibre of our once-proud nation.

Oh, I almost forgot. This year, in case you're interested, I'm running to raise money for Mesomorphs Against Endorphin Abuse. See you there.

# End endomorphic lunacy

Christian Tyler believes marathon hysteria is undermining Britain's moral fibre

Here they come again: sweating, jostling, stumbling, groaning, eyes rolling, chests heaving, flanks shuddering.

No, it's not the last stampede of the infected British beef herd on its way to the knacker's yard. This is the annual eruption of an inexplicable, self-inflicted derangement of the human nervous system which doctors call *circonvoluta nervosa londinensis* and what the rest of us know as The London Marathon.

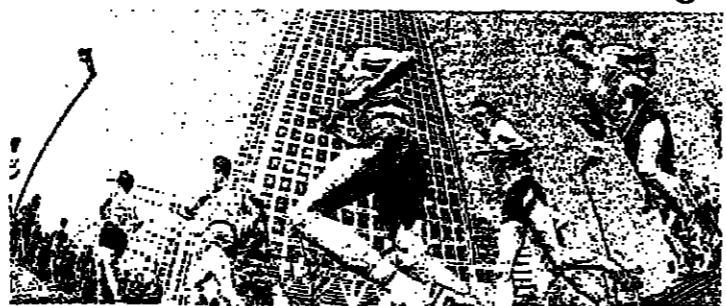
The infection grows by the year. There were a mere 6,700 starters for the very first run in 1981. For next Sunday's stampede no fewer than 88,000 people put down their names for 27,000 available places. It is more than an infection; it is an epidemic. More worrying still, it is a psychological epidemic, like a cult which is practised in private for most of the year but which demands its annual feast day, its ritual mass sacrifice.

If this dreadful festival of sweat were confined to just one day a year, the rest of us might ignore the clogged streets, the paralysed traf-

fic, the air heavy with the stench of embroilment, the staggering victims interspersed with strangely attired celebrity exhibitionists.

But for weeks beforehand parks and river walks thoughtfully provided by the city fathers in a kinder age have been polluted with cult members preparing for their ritual. If you walk in their path, they will knock you down rather than stop or step aside. Driven by strange glandular secretions, they are blind to the world, locked in their own private hell, as dangerous as elephants in *musth*.

One would not mind if marathon madness infected only the athletes for whom the event was obviously designed (remember: the original Marathon Man was no volunteer; he was on an important military mission, and paid the supreme price).



Serious business: runners in the London marathon pass Canary Wharf

But the enthusiasts of today are not athletes. They do not run with spring and bounce. They stumble along, feet barely leaving the ground, arms trailing, faces and legs puce with the punishment they are inflicting on their internal organs and joints. No amount of fancy apparel will persuade me they

are enjoying themselves - not even the skimpy pink French knickers or the figure-hugging silver Lycra sweatsuits (and that's only the men).

Running is a serious business and should be done on running tracks. Long-distance running is suitable only for ectomorphs, defined as per-

sons "with a lean and delicate build of body and large skin surface in comparison with weight". These are the people, you remember, who at school could run 10 miles across soggy moorland and come back looking serene and scarcely out of breath while us short-haul specialists crawled to the finishing line with ghastly grins and heaving stomachs.

Most of the fanatics I have seen on the towpath in recent weeks are plainly endomorphic, which, politely put, means they are "persons of soft round build and high proportion of fat tissue".

Endomorphs should not be confused with the chemical substances that drive them to marathon madness. These are called "endorphins", an abbreviation from "endogenous morphine", and are defined as "a group of peptide neurotransmitters

Les Enfants Terribles is carved

saw the climax of John Hus-

available on the National Health Service.

Handwritten text in Arabic script

سكنا من الاموال

Last week's preliminary results

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Year, Pre-tax profit, Earnings per share, Dividend per share. Lists various companies like AFAC, Alpha Airports, Biffa, etc.

Results due next week

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Announcement date, Last year interest, Dividend per share, This year interest. Lists companies like AFAC, Alpha Airports, Biffa, etc.

Last week's interim results

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Year, Pre-tax profit, Earnings per share, Dividend per share. Lists companies like Biffa, Biffa, etc.

Interim dividends

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Announcement date, Last year interest, Dividend per share, This year interest. Lists companies like AFAC, Alpha Airports, Biffa, etc.

Gift issues - best value v tax status

Table comparing gift issues based on tax status (Non-taxpayers vs 20% taxpayers) and value (Conventional vs Index-linked). Columns include Stock, Price, Yield %, and Volatility %.

Directors' share transactions in their own companies

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Shares, Value, No of directors. Lists transactions for companies like BPP Holdings, Biffa, etc.

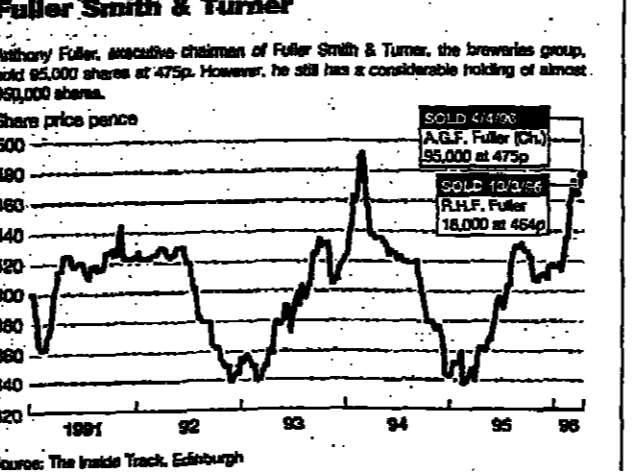
Bids

Table with columns: Company, Bidder, Bid price, Bid date. Lists takeover bids for companies like CentreGold, Eves, etc.

The biggest takeover battle under way in the UK moved closer to conclusion this week after Rentokil raised its offer for rival business services group BET to £2.1bn, writes Geoff Dyer.

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Shares, Value, No of directors. Lists transactions for companies like BPP Holdings, Biffa, etc.

Fuller Smith & Turner



Too many heads buried in the sand...?

Clay Harris discovers that an apparent loophole in British law holds the key to why ostrich farmers are having to count their eggs

It takes 42 days for an ostrich egg to hatch. But while investors who bought thousands of birds through the Ostrich Farming Corporation may not have to wait that long to discover the fate of their money, they could find themselves envying the ostrich hen who gets her egg-laying over in 15 straining minutes and then strolls away.

Because individuals were being sold specific birds, OFC was allowed to argue that this was not a collective investment subject to regulation. This interpretation might founder on the way OFC's chick allocation, with buy-back at a guaranteed price, worked. If it could be proved that every chick allocated to an owner was the offspring of his or her own bird, the scheme might just escape the regulatory net.

Even an ostrich would shake its head in disbelief. The ostrich industry has a plausible story to tell, and perhaps even an attractive product to sell. Yes, the meat has desirable qualities: low in fat and cholesterol, high in protein. Yes, it tastes like lean beef (judging by the fillet that Rob Colard - who farms ostriches in Wales with his cousin Will - served to guests on Easter Sunday in the 18th century Triangle Inn near Rhayader).

And yes, the BSE scare could increase demand, while there appear to be lucrative markets for leather and feathers. But more than 50 per cent a year guaranteed? Who is the bird-brain here? If you had discovered that Midas touch, would you share it with strangers? Of all the capital in the world available for investment, why did OFC focus on individuals in countries like the UK?

The answer is that it was an unregulated activity, thanks to an apparent loophole in the Financial Services Act.

'Rescue schemes' have been mooted, including one from as far away as Australia. Farmers are keen to build up their flocks and, the more they can use outside capital, the happier they are

Several "rescue schemes" have been mooted already, including one from as far away as Australia. Farmers are keen to build up their flocks and, the more they can use outside investors' capital, the happier they are.

For the same reason, expect to see offers to buy birds, although probably at "distress" prices. Investors who still believe in the ostrich story and want to hang on should avoid guarantee schemes, even if they do survive, and compare carefully as many competing offers as they can. Most will be based on the farmer taking a share of the hen's hatch. Visiting the farm itself is also a good idea.

Moreover, do not count your chickens based on the high prices that breeding ostriches fetch now. Even if - especially if - demand for ostrich meat and products takes off, prices will fall. Concentrate on the slaughter value.

It is not a magical bird. It is a commodity, subject to the law of supply and demand. You might still want a flutter - but that is all it is.

Colin Stephen Whitmore in Salisbury, Wiltshire, is starting an action group for OFC owners. Tel: 01729-419 979.

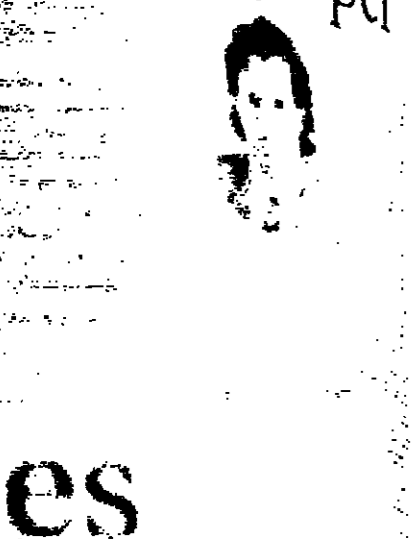
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Life is no exam paper



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# Weekend Investor

Wall Street

## A stressful wait for the 'firemen'

Lisa Bransten on the sharp differences between analysts

Tim Straus, a vice-president with Jeffries & Company, a Boston-based investment bank, likens US investors to firefighters sitting around the station waiting for the inevitable blaze.

"There is a classical sociological study in which firemen were examined for signs of stress and anxiety," he writes. "To make a typically long sociological study short, the longer the firehouse went without a fire, the more anxious and visibly jittery the firemen became. The law of percentages had conditioned them instantly to know that the longer they went without a fire to fight, the closer they were to the next fire."

The question that has emerged on Wall Street since the Good Friday release of a second set of surprisingly strong employment figures is whether the information signals an approaching fire or whether the growing fears of inflation are just so much smoke?

It is a question that has driven a wedge between stock market analysts over the past few weeks and led to a sharp debate about whether the market is due for a correction of 10 per cent or more to end the bull run that began at the end of 1994.

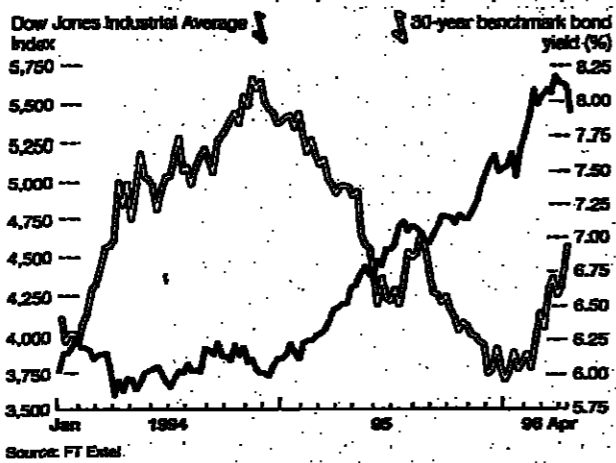
"The fire that's now anticipated is that a strong economy and inflation are going to derail the bull case for the stock and bond markets," says Straus. But he thinks such investor worries are misplaced, and that the rise in employment is a temporary blip rather than a new trend.

Data on inflation has been mixed. Last week's figures on March producer and consumer prices were both higher than market expectations. Gains were mostly due to increasing food and energy prices and did not spread beyond those two volatile areas.

The risk for shares, says Straus, lies not in a robust economy, but in the potential for such worries to drive up long-term interest rates and choke off growth in an economy that is only slowly shaking off its sluggishness of late last year.

So far this year the yield on the benchmark 30-year Treasury bond - which rises as the price falls - has jumped nearly a full percentage point with about half of that increase since the March 8

### Nervous days on the Dow



release of the first strong jobs report.

Rising bond yields are bad for the equity market because of the increased cost of capital, but for most of this year the equity market managed to shake off jitters on the bond market.

Shares in the Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled 171 points on March 8, but they regained 111 points the next day and managed to set a new record high on April 3.

In the first four days of last week, however, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was off nearly 196 points or 3 per cent although the index was promising to end the week with a small gain as Treasury prices recovered some lost ground.

One factor aiding bonds on Friday was a press report that Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, believes that fears that the economy is out of control are unfounded just as was the case with fears late last year that a recession was imminent.

Abby Cohen, co-chair of the investment policy committee at Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, agrees with the view that the economy is not growing fast enough to trigger earnings eroding inflation. But she thinks that the market is likely to remain stuck in a range until investors reach the same conclusion.

"We have seen a trough in inflation and wage growth but that does not mean that they are about to skyrocket," she says.

On the other side of the debate are market watchers such as Stephen Roach, chief economist at Morgan Stanley and Michael Metz, chief market strategist at Oppenheimer. They believe that in the end the tightening labour market must lead to pressures on profits.

"With low unemployment and high job creation there is going to be some upward pressure on wages and any sign of that is going to be lethal for the markets," Metz says. He expects a sell-off that should take the market at least 10 per cent lower by the third quarter of this year.

Such a correction could come slowly. One lesson US investors learned from the market tumbles of 1987 and 1990 is that the biggest money is made from buying, not selling, into market declines. So far this year most large declines have eventually been met with upturns in share prices.

That thinking could send the market higher next week, but it would leave open the worry over whether last week's losses were enough to help investors let off some nervous energy or just false alarms that heightened the tension.

Straus thinks investors are waiting for another surprising piece of economic data that would rattle the market and calm nerves before the market can resume its upward course. "I don't think you've seen the real fire yet."

Straus thinks investors are waiting for another surprising piece of economic data that would rattle the market and calm nerves before the market can resume its upward course. "I don't think you've seen the real fire yet."

**Dow Jones Ind Average**

Monday	5594.37	-86.51
Tuesday	5560.41	-33.96
Wednesday	5485.98	-74.43
Thursday	5487.07	+1.09
Friday		

London

## A detached view of the future

Philip Coggan looks at the finer points of decoupling

Decoupling. It is nothing to do with Charles and Diana, Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson, or even Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley. Instead, it is the idea that European financial markets can liberate themselves from the dictates of Wall Street.

There are certainly respectable arguments that decoupling should occur. After the March US employment numbers confirmed the economic strength inherent in the February data, it seems likely that the next move in US interest rates is up. But European economies are still sluggish and further rate cuts seem likely.

Bond markets seem to be making the break. Over the past week, German government bond yields have moved below those in the US; only a month ago they were a quarter of a percentage point higher.

European equity investors might well wish that their market had been "coupled" with the US during the 1990s. Since the start of 1991, the FT-A European index has underperformed the S&P 500 by 20.5 per cent. This, week, however, European investors discovered the benefits of detachment. In response to the US jobs report, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 200 points in the course of three trading days - but Europe stayed fairly calm.

London, which tends to be Europe's most devoted follower of the US, was no exception. By the end of yesterday's trading, the FTSE 100 index had gained 11 points over the course of the trading week.

The market's resilience seemed due to a number of factors. First, there were figures for manufacturing output which showed a slowing economy, and revived hopes for further base rate cuts. Then, there was a flow of money into the market as unit trusts invested the revenue from funds of personal equity plan holders who had subscribed just before the April 5 deadline.

Bid speculation, which has been buoying the UK market for some time, also helped, with a higher bid from Rentokil for BEI, a suggestion that Deutsche Telekom might be interested in buying Cable & Wireless, and reports that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission had cleared the bids for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity.

Finally, in another twist on the decoupling argument, there was some talk that US investors could be switching money out of their domestic market and into the UK and Europe.

Within the UK market, shares in the construction sector were lifted by reports of a revival in the housing market and by the latest cut in mortgage rates, initiated by the Nationwide, to their lowest level in 31 years. Despite such encouragement, the "feel-good factor" has not yet emerged to help the government, as was made clear by its latest by-election defeat, in south-east Staffordshire.

Nevertheless, there are many who hope that rate and tax cuts will bolster consumer confidence and help the economy rebound. "On our forecasts for the economy, stronger demand should begin to provide a more obvious stimulus to output over the next three months, a sequence that should give a further stimulus to companies with a domestic orientation," says Richard Jeffrey, Charterhouse group economist. "If this proves correct, it will be right to hold faith with the areas of the market that made the running in the first quarter."

But Jeffrey is mildly less bullish than before. While he retains his end-year target of 4,000, he adds: "This should be taken more as a guide to the potential upside this year than to a sustainable level."

Jeffrey cites political worries as one factor that might prevent the market from rising further. Now that the government's majority is down to one, every time a backbencher sneezes the markets will start worrying that John Major's fragile lead will disappear.

While it might seem as if the prospect of a Labour government should be priced into shares, the markets have been counting on the Conservatives limping through to 1997; an early election would be seen as an unpleasant surprise. Then, too, some of the positive factors for the markets may not have much mileage left. Despite the takeover boom, the evidence suggests that institutions are not sitting on piles of cash ready for reinvestment into equities.

Ian Scott of Lehman Brothers says that while UK institutional cash levels rose by more than £11bn during 1995, this had only a small impact on their overall portfolios. He estimates that cash, as a proportion of total assets, rose from 4.7 per cent at the end of 1994 to 4.9 per cent at the end of 1995.

That figure roughly squares with data from the WM Company, which shows that pension funds had 4.5 per cent of their portfolios in cash at the end of 1995. While that was higher than the 1994 level, it was well below the 6 to 7 per cent recorded late in the 1980s.

Moreover, pension funds have less than half the holding in conventional gilts that they had in 1987, despite the provisions of the 1985 Pensions Act which are expected widely to lead to a rise in bond holdings as managers of mature funds match assets and liabilities.

Given that the yield on the benchmark 10-year gilt remains stubbornly above 8 per cent and that, at 2.94, the gilt-equity yield ratio is at its highest level since the start of 1995, there could be a temptation to put new cash into bonds rather than shares.

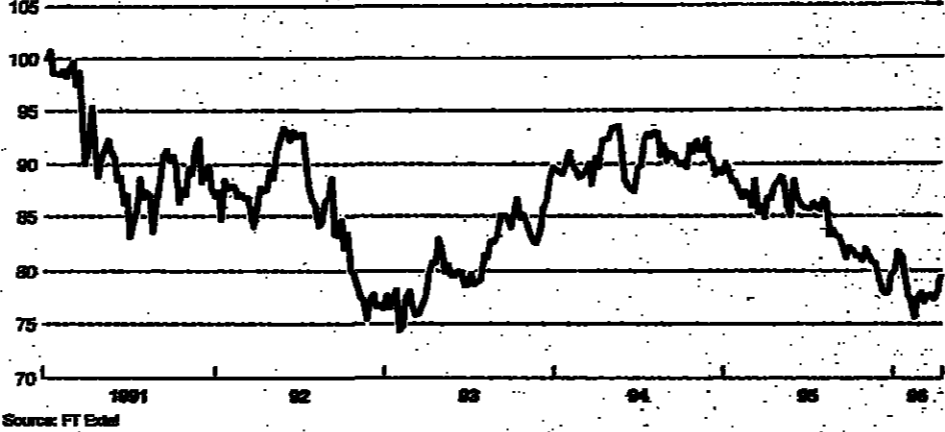
One further caveat is worth mentioning. The overwhelming consensus among commentators is that inflation is dead. This week, the Commodity Research Bureau index reached an eight-year high on the back of rising oil and grain prices. A commodity price rise in 1994 turned out to be a false dusk. But just suppose, this time, that the consensus turns out to be wrong...



Troubled waters: there are arguments in favour of decoupling markets

### The new world outperforms the old

FT/SGP Europe (\$ terms) relative to the S&P Composite Index



### Highlights of the week

	Price	Change	52 week	52 week	
	Ytd	on week	High	Low	
FT-SE 100 Index	5788.2	+11.2	5781.3	5170.1	Big speculation
FT-SE Mid 250 Index	4406.0	+22.7	4408.0	3482.6	Profit-taking among second buyers
Accor Mining	220	-25	245	215	Post-election selling
Bearer Homes	201	+14	201	130	Mortgage price war
Blue Circle	284	-23%	388	277	Sector revival
Corus Int	232	+46	232	38	Successful clinical trials
Enka G	859	-29	115	74	Stock 'buy' note
Euroland Life	74	-8	217	62	Strong traffic flows
Minor Group	229	+11	222	130	Speculative buying
PowerGen	582%	+13	608	473	Big clearance expected
RTZ	696	+50	696	776	Commodities index at 8-year high
Renold	321	-74%	371	246	Bid for BEI raised
Stratford Business A	242	-45	746	461%	US share index cooling
Wolsey	489	+51	489	327	Speculative buying
Yale Cotto	249	+13	350	276	Post results buying



Barry Riley

## Tuning in to the big picture

But don't blink - or you could miss something important

Suddenly, the global investment strategists are glued to their screens again. Forget the slow-moving days of the first quarter of the year. The world's markets are decoupling, which means that currencies, bond and equities are moving in various directions. Something is really happening out there.

For one thing, the long-slumbering dollar has been hitting two-year highs against the yen and has been nibbling at the 1.50 level against the D-mark. There is continuing agony in the dollar bond market, where prices at the long end have tumbled by 13 per cent this year so far.

During the past few days, the yield on 10-year US Treasuries has sprinted up right past the yield on German bonds. Wall Street has taken a hit of around 4 per cent since Monday while Tokyo is on the opposite tack: the chartists there are getting excited about the Nikkei's still somewhat hesitant push through 21,600, a level which, for four years, has capped the Japanese equity market's trading range.

has begun to recover at about the same rate, albeit starting from the bottom of a deep recession.

As for Germany and France, they are generating little or no growth and unemployment is rising fast.

Interest rate expectations in the US have changed radically. At the start of the year, the bond market appeared to believe that the economy actually was in danger of slipping into recession. Yet, the Federal Reserve's late-January quarter-point cut in the discount rate is not now going to be the first of several in 1996, after all.

In fact, for all this being a presidential election year in the US, the next move is likely to be up. This prospect is allowing the dollar to shrug off the effects of some still-dismal trade deficits and to start, at last, to show some strength. So far in 1996, it has risen by about 5 per cent against both the yen and the D-mark.

have been strong for some time, but this has been regarded as a weather-related problem unconnected to the economic cycle. All right. But now there has also been a surge in energy prices.

Brent crude hit \$23 a barrel this week, up one-third within three months. And although that looks like no more than a temporary seasonal squeeze, it could be that we cannot be complacent any longer about the prices of base metals and other industrial raw materials if global economic growth really is picking up. Suddenly, RTZ's share price is hitting new highs.

Fixed interest bonds are willing badly under the pressure. They have been highly volatile for several years now, probably because of the influence of leveraged speculators and the presence of too many governments ready to issue their bonds at any price. So, there is over-reaction to minor fluctuations in global inflation and economic activity.

Likely rises in economic growth and inflation rates send bond investors scampering for cover. Thus, the US Treasury 30-year bond yield has jumped from 6 to almost 7 per cent since the turn of the year. The UK's long gilt yields are pushing towards 8 per cent.

Over in Tokyo, things look very different. Although the stock market is 50 per cent up since last June's bottom, its level is not historically all that high.

The overhang of selling by various financial institutions and the corporate sector at above 21,000 seems largely to have dried up, and many global investors think this is the best cyclical prospect around just now.

poorly-performing life assurance companies, are going to be big buyers of equities.

Certainly, Japanese bonds look unattractive. Japanese institutions might do well to invest overseas, but most of them are too frightened to do this because currency losses have cost them so dearly in the past. So, they have nowhere much else to go but the Tokyo stock market. And while Japanese stocks do not exactly look fundamentally cheap, at least company profits are now moving in the right direction.

As for continental Europe, the softening of currencies against the dollar will come as a welcome relief for these high-cost economies. There is room for short-term interest rates to edge down further, probably to below 3 per cent. But economies such as that of Germany are more responsive to long-term rates on bonds which have, perversely, been rising in recent months although, in the past month, they have stood aside from the latest jump in US Treasury yields.

Offshore managed funds and UK managed funds are listed in Section One

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Table of FT Managed Funds Service listing various fund categories such as 'Scottish Amicable - Contd.', 'Scottish Provident Investment - Contd.', and 'Scottish Widows' Group'. Each entry includes fund names, unit prices, and performance metrics.

Table of FT Managed Funds Service listing various fund categories such as 'Swedish Life - Contd.', 'TDS Life Ltd', and 'Teachers' Assurance Company Ltd'. Each entry includes fund names, unit prices, and performance metrics.

Money Market Trust Funds

Table listing Money Market Trust Funds with columns for fund name, price, and other details.

Money Market Bank Accounts

Table listing Money Market Bank Accounts with columns for bank name, account type, and interest rates.

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MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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OFFSHORE AND OVERSEAS

BERMUDA (SIB RECOGNISED)

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BERMUDA (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Bermuda regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

GUERNSEY (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Guernsey funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

IRELAND (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Ireland funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

IRELAND (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Ireland regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LET Asset Management Ltd

Table listing LET Asset Management funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

ISLE OF MAN (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Isle of Man funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

ISLE OF MAN (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Isle of Man regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

Deloitte Europe Fund Mgrs Ireland Ltd - Contd.

Table listing Deloitte Europe Fund Mgrs Ireland funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

JERSEY (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Jersey funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

JERSEY (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Jersey regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

Merrill Lynch Fund Managers Intl Ltd

Table listing Merrill Lynch Fund Managers Intl funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Luxembourg funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

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ISLE OF MAN (REGULATED)\*\*

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JERSEY (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Jersey funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

JERSEY (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Jersey regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

INVESTCO International Limited - Contd.

Table listing INVESTCO International Limited funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Luxembourg funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Luxembourg regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

Fidelity Funds (S)

Table listing Fidelity Funds (S) including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Luxembourg funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Luxembourg regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

S-E-Santien Luxembourg SA - Contd.

Table listing S-E-Santien Luxembourg SA funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (SIB RECOGNISED)

Table listing Luxembourg funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

LUXEMBOURG (REGULATED)\*\*

Table listing Luxembourg regulated funds including Royal Bank of Canada O/S Fd Mgrs Ltd - Contd., Guernsey (Regulated), and Jersey (Sib Recognised).

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OFFSHORE INSURANCES



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Main table containing various fund categories: Global Investment Funds, Fictel Group, Offshore Insurance Co Ltd, Royal Life International, Chameleon Funds Limited, Global Asset Management, MD Securities/Enterprise International, and Selective Assets Management. Each entry includes fund name, price, and change.

OTHER OFFSHORE FUNDS

OFFSHORE INSURANCES

MANAGED FUNDS NOTES: This section provides detailed information regarding the funds, including their objectives, risks, and performance metrics.

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WORLD STOCK MARKETS

NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES (Apr 12 / US\$)

Table of US stock market data including S&P 500, Dow Jones, and various sector indices.

CANADA (Apr 12 / Can \$)

Table of Canadian stock market data including the TSX 300 index.

MEXICO (Apr 12 / Mex \$)

Table of Mexican stock market data including the IPC index.

BRAZIL (Apr 12 / Real)

Table of Brazilian stock market data including the Ibovespa index.

ARGENTINA (Apr 12 / Pesos)

Table of Argentine stock market data including the MERVAL index.

CHILE (Apr 12 / Chilean \$)

Table of Chilean stock market data including the IPSA index.

PERU (Apr 12 / Nuevo Sol)

Table of Peruvian stock market data including the IGV index.

VENEZUELA (Apr 12 / Bolívares)

Table of Venezuelan stock market data including the IVBOP index.

COLOMBIA (Apr 12 / Colombian \$)

Table of Colombian stock market data including the IVBOL index.

ECUADOR (Apr 12 / Dólares)

Table of Ecuadorian stock market data including the ISE index.

PANAMA (Apr 12 / Balboas)

Table of Panamanian stock market data including the ISE index.

CUBA (Apr 12 / Cuban \$)

Table of Cuban stock market data including the ISE index.

HAITI (Apr 12 / Gourdes)

Table of Haitian stock market data including the ISE index.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (Apr 12 / Dominican \$)

Table of Dominican Republic stock market data including the ISE index.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (Apr 12 / Trinidad \$)

Table of Trinidad and Tobago stock market data including the ISE index.

BARBADOS (Apr 12 / Barbados \$)

Table of Barbados stock market data including the ISE index.

JAMAICA (Apr 12 / Jamaican \$)

Table of Jamaican stock market data including the ISE index.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (Apr 12 / Antigua \$)

Table of Antigua and Barbuda stock market data including the ISE index.

BAHAMAS (Apr 12 / Bahamian \$)

Table of Bahamas stock market data including the ISE index.

BERMUDA (Apr 12 / Bermuda \$)

Table of Bermuda stock market data including the ISE index.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (Apr 12 / St. Vincent \$)

Table of St. Vincent and the Grenadines stock market data including the ISE index.

ST. LUCIA (Apr 12 / St. Lucia \$)

Table of St. Lucia stock market data including the ISE index.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS (Apr 12 / St. Kitts \$)

Table of St. Kitts and Nevis stock market data including the ISE index.

DOMINICA (Apr 12 / Dominican \$)

Table of Dominica stock market data including the ISE index.

GUAYAMA (Apr 12 / Guayama \$)

Table of Guayama stock market data including the ISE index.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (Apr 12 / Trinidad \$)

Table of Trinidad and Tobago stock market data including the ISE index.

Rockwell components for heavy and medium duty trucks and trailers keep businesses on the road to exceptional performance. Includes Rockwell logo.

EUROPE

AMSTERDAM (Apr 12 / Gulden)

Table of Amsterdam stock market data including the AEX index.

BRUSSELS (Apr 12 / Franc)

Table of Brussels stock market data including the BEL 20 index.

PARIS (Apr 12 / Franc)

Table of Paris stock market data including the CAC 40 index.

LONDON (Apr 12 / Pound)

Table of London stock market data including the FTSE 100 index.

ZURICH (Apr 12 / Swiss Franc)

Table of Zurich stock market data including the SMI 20 index.

VIENNA (Apr 12 / Schilling)

Table of Vienna stock market data including the VIENNA 20 index.

BERNE (Apr 12 / Swiss Franc)

Table of Berne stock market data including the SMI 20 index.

STOCKHOLM (Apr 12 / Krona)

Table of Stockholm stock market data including the OMX 30 index.

COPENHAGEN (Apr 12 / Danish Krone)

Table of Copenhagen stock market data including the OMX 25 index.

OSLO (Apr 12 / Norwegian Krone)

Table of Oslo stock market data including the OMX 30 index.

HELSINKI (Apr 12 / Finnish Markka)

Table of Helsinki stock market data including the HELSINKI 20 index.

WARSAW (Apr 12 / Polish Zloty)

Table of Warsaw stock market data including the WIG 20 index.

PRAGUE (Apr 12 / Czech Koruna)

Table of Prague stock market data including the PRAGUE 20 index.

BUDAPEST (Apr 12 / Hungarian Forint)

Table of Budapest stock market data including the BUDAPEST 20 index.

BRATISLAVA (Apr 12 / Slovak Koruna)

Table of Bratislava stock market data including the BRATISLAVA 20 index.

VIENNA (Apr 12 / Austrian Schilling)

Table of Vienna stock market data including the VIENNA 20 index.

INDICES

Table of various international stock indices including Argentina, Australia, Austria, etc.

US INDICES

Table of US stock indices including Dow Jones, S&P 500, and various sector indices.

AFRICA

Table of African stock market data including Johannesburg, Nairobi, etc.

ASIA

Table of Asian stock market data including Hong Kong, Singapore, etc.

OCEANIA

Table of Oceania stock market data including Sydney, Melbourne, etc.

MIDDLE EAST

Table of Middle East stock market data including Tel Aviv, Amman, etc.

PACIFIC

Table of Pacific stock market data including Tokyo, Seoul, etc.

COMMODITIES

Table of commodity prices including oil, gold, etc.

CURRENCY

Table of currency exchange rates for various countries.

FIXED INCOME

Table of fixed income securities including bonds, etc.

REUTERS

Table of Reuters market data including various indices and prices.

MARKET COMMENTARY

Market commentary text discussing market trends and news.

MARKET DATA

Table of market data including various indices and prices.

MARKET DATA

Table of market data including various indices and prices.

MARKET DATA

Table of market data including various indices and prices.

MARKET DATA

Table of market data including various indices and prices.

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was pick from the losses

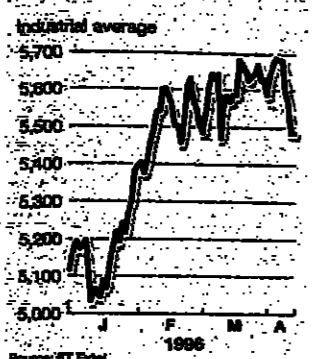
WORLD STOCK MARKETS

AMERICA

Texas picks up from early losses

Wall Street

A rebound on the US Treasury market helped share prices to modest gains in mid-session trading yesterday in spite of weakness in the technology sector, caused by a weak earnings report from Texas Instruments, writes Lisa Brunsen in New York.



Exchange composite added 1.18 at 571.37. NYSE volume was a heavy 262m shares.

A press report that Mr Alan Greenspan believed the markets had over-reacted to fears of an overheating economy did much to put both the stock and bond markets at ease yesterday. The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond ended nearly a week of weakness with a gain of 1/8 cent at 8 1/8, the yield down 11 basis points to 6.52 per cent.

softness to declining prices for Dynamic Random Access Memory chips, known as DRAMs. After initially falling \$2 on the report, shares in Texas Instruments managed a gain of 1/4 at \$52 1/4.

Other Internet-related companies were mostly lower. The American Stock Exchange Interactive Week Internet Index shed 1.3 per cent amid declines in companies such as Netscape Communications, which lost \$2 1/4 at \$51 1/4.

Canada

Toronto was weak in quiet midday trade, dragged lower by falling golds in spite of the moderately stronger tone on Wall Street. The TSE-300 composite index was 13.50 weaker by noon at 5,019.30 in volume of 44.7m shares.

EUROPE

Frankfurt sets trend with gain during afternoon

Markets wavered until the release of the US CPI, then moved higher.

FRANKFURT ended up during floor trading ahead of the US data. The DAX index rose 2.07 to 2,611.78, and the Ibs accelerated to 2,526.74.

Mannesmann lost DML70 to DM551, before recovering to DM553 in the Ibs after announcing a rise in net profit for 1995 to DM701m from DM349m a year earlier.

SAP recovered DM19 to DM194, then to an Ibs DM195.20 after announcing that it would release first quarter 1996 earnings next Wednesday, which was earlier than had previously been announced.

ZURICH found a new focus in Roche after the group reported good first quarter sales figures, but investors moved out of the banks after

THE WEEK'S CHANGES

Table with 2 columns: City, % Change. Milan +3.3, Frankfurt +1.1, Amsterdam +1, Paris +0, Zurich -1/6.

UBS rejected CS Holding's merger overtures

The SMI index, hesitant ahead of the day's US data, subsequently picked up to close 8.5 higher at \$375.5.

Roche certificates jumped \$F130 to \$F139.75, but the uptick mood failed to carry over to the other leading pharmaceutical companies.

ASIA PACIFIC

Mazda suspended in Tokyo on Ford stake building

THE WEEK'S CHANGES

Table with 2 columns: City, % Change. Taipei +10.5, Sydney +1.3, Seoul +0.8, Kuala Lumpur -0.2, Singapore -0.5, Hong Kong -2.6.

THE NIKKEI 225 INDEX

The Nikkei 225 index lost 33.96 at 21,660.47, having moved between 21,579.48 and 21,739.54.

Volume jumped to 885m shares against 694m.

The Topix index of all first section stocks rose 0.58 to 1,672.59 and the Nikkei 300 fell 0.57 to 310.90.

In London, the ISE/Nikkei 50 index was up 0.13 at 1,448.47.

The Nikkei lost its afternoon strength following the announcement by Mazda Motor that it would be selling 144.1m new shares to Ford at \$38 per share, 22 per cent lower than the stock's close on Thursday at \$46.

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FT-SE Actuarial Share Indices

Table with 2 columns: Index, Value. FT-SE Actuarial 100, 1642.00; FT-SE Actuarial 200, 1088.84.

THE EUROPEAN SERIES

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OSLO was pleased by a rally in the price of oil and the dollar, and moved to its third consecutive closing high.

The Total index climbed steadily throughout the day to peak at 797.63, but dipped slightly to finish up 6.19 at 797.44.

WARSAW retreated slightly following five gaining sessions and the Wig index fell 0.1 per cent to 11,663.4 as turnover rose by 20.7 per cent to 77.3m zlotys.

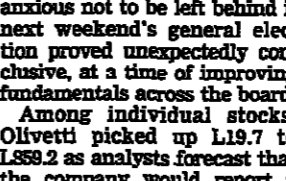
AMSTERDAM took some profits, notably in Heineken which fell \$16 to \$136. The Aex index slipped 1.36 to 541.90, but analysts were not unduly pessimistic about the outlook, noting that dollar strength would support sentiment.

Abol, also under pressure from profit takers, later, shed another \$1.60 to \$18.

Océ van der Grinten, the manufacturer of photocopiers,

Japan

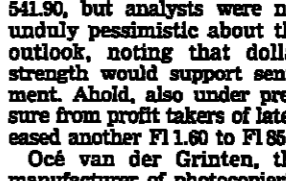
Nikkei 225 Average, rebased



Source: FT Data

Hong Kong

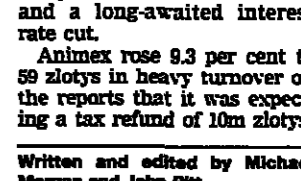
Hang Seng, rebased



Source: FT Data

Australia

All Ordinaries Index, rebased



Source: FT Data

Mexico in good form

Mexico City was in good spirits during the morning as the IPC index added 69.07 to 3,113.08. Traders cited greater optimism about the country's economic prospects following remarks by the finance minister on Thursday.

They said the market had been encouraged by Mr Guillermo Ortiz's comments that he did not expect April inflation to rise above 3 per cent, well below the 5 per cent target set by the government's programme to stimulate restructuring.

S Africa golds advance

Johannesburg's gold shares ended near the day's best levels after rising slowly on a steady bullion price and a weak rand which lured a handful of buyers back into the market.

Industrial shares also finished a touch better after a choppy day marked by currency worries and concerns about Wall Street.

THE WEEK'S CHANGES

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LIFFE EQUITY OPTIONS

Table with columns: Option, Call, Put, Price, etc. for various indices like S&P 500, Nikkei 225, etc.

RISES AND FALLS

Table with columns: Rise, Fall, Star, etc. for various stock indices.

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

Table with columns: First Dealings, Last Dealings, etc. for various options.

LONDON RECENT ISSUES: EQUITIES

Table with columns: Issue, Price, etc. for various equity issues.

FT/S&P ACTUARIAL WORLD INDICES

Table with columns: Country, Index, etc. for various world indices.

THE WEEK'S CHANGES

Table with columns: City, % Change, etc. for various world indices.

FT GOLD MINES INDEX

Table with columns: Index, Value, etc. for gold mines.

FINANCIAL TIMES EQUITY INDICES

Table with columns: Index, Value, etc. for various equity indices.

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LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE: Dealings

Details of business done shown below have been taken with consent from the London Stock Exchange Official List and should not be reproduced without permission. Details relate to those securities not included in the FT Share Information Service. Unless otherwise indicated prices are in pence. The prices are those at which the business was done in the 24 hours up to 5 pm on Thursday and settled through the Stock Exchange Telford system, they are not in order of execution but in ascending order which denotes the day's highest and lowest dealings. For those securities in which no business was recorded in Thursday's Official List the latest recorded business in the two previous days is given with the relevant date. † Bargains at special prices. ‡ Bargains due the previous day.

British Funds, etc

Treasury 15 1/2% St 2000/03 - £129 1/2 (10Apr96)

Corporation and County Stocks

Blackburn Corp 3 1/2% Int St - £28 (Apr96)
Northampton Corp 4% Core Deb St - £41 (Apr96)

UK Public Bonds

Scottish Agric Sec Corp 13% Deb St 1978 - £16 1/2 (Apr96)

Foreign Stocks, Bonds, etc (coupons payable in London)

Greenwich (London) 5% 1981/82 (last with Accrual) - £25 (Apr96)
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Starling Issues by Overseas Borrowers

Asian Development Bank 10 1/4% Ln St 2000 - £112 1/2 (Apr96)
Asian Development Bank 10 1/4% Ln St 2000 - £112 1/2 (Apr96)

Listed Companies (excluding Investment Trusts)

ABF Investments PLC 5 1/2% Ln St 87 - £10 (Apr96)
ABF Investments PLC 5 1/2% Ln St 87 - £10 (Apr96)

Bulmer PLC 8 1/2% Cum Red Pt 2001/05 - £118 (Apr96)
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BT Group PLC 7 1/2% Cum Red Pt 2001/05 - £125 1/2 (Apr96)
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FT-SE ACTUARIES INDICES

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سكرا من الامارات

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

INV TRUSTS SPLIT CAPITAL - Cont.

Table listing investment trusts with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

OTHER INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing other investment trusts with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Table listing investment companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

LEISURE & HOTELS

Table listing leisure and hotel companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

LEISURE & HOTELS - Cont.

Table listing leisure and hotel companies (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

LIFE ASSURANCE

Table listing life assurance companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

MEDIA

Table listing media companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

OIL EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Table listing oil exploration and production companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

OIL INTEGRATED

Table listing oil integrated companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

OTHER FINANCIAL

Table listing other financial companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

OTHER FINANCIAL - Cont.

Table listing other financial companies (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

PAPER, PACKAGING & PRINTING

Table listing paper, packaging, and printing companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Table listing pharmaceutical companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

PROPERTY

Table listing property companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing support services companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

PROPERTY - Cont.

Table listing property companies (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

RETAILERS, FOOD

Table listing food retailers with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Table listing general retailers with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

RETAILERS, GENERAL - Cont.

Table listing general retailers (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing support services companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

AIM

Table listing companies on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

SUPPORT SERVICES - Cont.

Table listing support services companies (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Table listing telecommunications companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

TEXTILES & APPAREL

Table listing textiles and apparel companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

TOBACCO

Table listing tobacco companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

TRANSPORT

Table listing transport companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

WATER

Table listing water companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

AIM - Cont.

Table listing companies on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) (continued) with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

AMERICANS

Table listing American companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

CANADIANS

Table listing Canadian companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

SOUTH AFRICANS

Table listing South African companies with columns for name, price, and other financial data.

GUIDE TO LONDON SHARE SERVICE

Price for the London Share Service delivered by FT Share, a member of the Financial Times Group. Company classifications are based on those used for the FT-SE 100 Index. Details of the service and how to use it are available on the FT website.

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 OPEN WEEKEND 13TH-14TH APRIL

# FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend April 13/April 14 1996

**Singer & Friedlander**  
 Investment Funds  
 0500 62 62 26

## Anglo-American tightens grip on Lonrho's mining operations

By Kenneth Gooding, in London

Lonrho, the UK conglomerate, yesterday effectively handed potential future operational control of its mining interests to Anglo American Corporation, South Africa's biggest company, in a deal which will have repercussions throughout the mining industry.

Mr Dieter Bock, Lonrho's chief executive, who sold Anglo a 5.9 per cent stake in the group for \$91m (£38m) last month, has now given it the right to buy his remaining 18.4 per cent by mid-September 1997 for 180p to 220p a share. Lonrho shares closed yesterday down 5 1/2p at 207 1/4p.

Lonrho intends to demerge its mining interests. Any cash resulting from the sale of Mr Bock's holding will be reinvested in the group's non-mining

interests, which include hotels, trading and agriculture. In the meantime, Anglo is to provide technical and other mining-related services to Lonrho, and a senior technical director of Anglo will join the Lonrho board.

Mr Julian Ogilvie Thompson, Anglo's chairman, said his group had bought more Lonrho shares last week at a slight discount to the market price to take the group's holding to 7.5 per cent.

He insisted Anglo did not intend to bid for the rest of Lonrho and had no plans to take control of the mining interests when they were demerged.

Nevertheless, the inescapable tightening of Anglo's grip on Lonrho's mining assets will cause consternation at Gencor, another South African mining group that already has close links with Lonrho, and at Ashanti Goldfields, the rapidly

growing Ghanaian gold group in which Lonrho has a 37 per cent stake and which is widely believed to be Anglo's main target. Gencor already owns 27 per cent of Lonrho's South African platinum business and had hoped to arrange a full merger between its Impala Platinum offshoot and the Lonrho operations.

This sparked a probe by the European Commission. Anglo's intervention will heighten concern because Anglo effectively controls Rustenburg, the western world's biggest platinum producer.

Mr Ogilvie Thompson said Anglo had been contacted by the Commission in connection with the inquiry. He did not think the new Anglo-Lonrho links should affect the Commission's investigation because, even if Anglo took its Lonrho holding to 26 per cent, "we would not be in control

or in charge of the company". He said Anglo had not contacted Gencor about the Lonrho link but he had recently had dinner with Mr Sam Jonah, Ashanti's chief executive and a Lonrho director, who was "happy with the arrangements".

Analysts suggest this might have been a diplomatic reaction by Mr Jonah who has indicated in the past that he wants to build an independent Ashanti into one of the world's biggest gold mining companies.

A Lonrho official said the closer links with Anglo should make the mining operations stronger and speed up the demerger. Mr Bock said: "It is in the best interests of Lonrho's mining business to have this commitment from Anglo."

See Lex

Rivals eye Lonrho's gems, Page 6

## Swiss banks

Continued from Page 1

pleased if a large portion of the independent votes went against Mr Studer. At the last shareholders' meeting, more than half the votes cast were proxies held by fund managers.

UBS directors have more than once used determined tactics to gain shareholder votes and to question the motives of those who do not support them in their long struggle with Mr Ehmer.

In the run-up to a shareholders' meeting in November, 1994, they sent two letters to employees urging them to give unconditional proxies to the directors. Employees held about 7 per cent of the total votes. They also hinted that Mr Ehmer's EZ Bank was improperly using proxies of clients to vote against the board.

Under Swiss law, fund managers are not obliged to vote clients' shares unless specific instructions are received. But if they do vote shares on which no instructions have been received, they must vote them in favour of board motions.

CS Holding said yesterday it would be voting its general proxies in favour of the board's proposals as usual. UBS has sent letters to large Swiss institutional investors, asking them if they have been in communication with other UBS shareholders.

## Britain set to clear renewed bids for electricity groups

By David Wighton in London

Mr Ian Lang, UK trade secretary, is expected to clear National Power and PowerGen to renew their bids for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity after the Monopolies and Mergers Commission gave its conditional go-ahead.

The London Stock Exchange yesterday launched an inquiry into the leaking of the MMC's report on the bids to the Economist magazine which led to share price rises throughout the sector.

The Department of Trade and Industry last night threatened the Economist with an injunction in an attempt to prevent further disclosures. The draft version obtained by the paper contains commercially confidential information which would not appear in the published document.

The report, which was passed to Mr Lang two weeks ago, recommends the bids by National Power and PowerGen be cleared subject to relatively minor conditions. But one of the five panel members has submitted a minority report calling for the bids to be blocked because they would tend to reduce competition and increase electricity prices.

Ms Patricia Hodgson, director of policy and planning at the BBC, argued that "the price of electricity is of such importance for the standard of living of consumers and the health of the economy as a whole that the balance of public interest would be to encourage further competition".

The rest of the panel, headed by Mr Graeme Odgers, the former BT managing director who now chairs the MMC, concluded that if allowed through without conditions the bids "may be expected to operate against the public interest". But they decided that subject to three main conditions, the detriment to the public interest would not be sufficient to justify blocking the bids.

The report said one benefit of the takeovers would be that each of the merged companies would be "a more effective international competitor, partly through increased size and partly because it would possess a wider range of skills and experience".

The MMC's conclusions were bitterly criticised by some of the other regional electricity companies which have remained independent after the wave of bids in the sector.

One senior executive said: "The MMC seems to have accepted many of the arguments against the bids but come to a wrong conclusion in part because of a misguided interest in creating national champions."

There was mixed reaction from electricity consumer groups. The National Consumer Council said the MMC would be "failing in its duty if it is recommending electricity takeover bids against the public interest" and said they must not go ahead without "strong regulatory protection".

The Energy Intensive Users Group, which represents large industrial customers, said the conditions appeared to meet its objections.

National Power and PowerGen would have to sell stakes in independent power stations owned by Southern and Midlands and give undertakings to "ring-fence" information about contracts signed by regional electricity companies with other generators. They would also have to ensure that the regulated business was run separately from the other operations.

Electricity switchback, Page 8  
 See Lex

## Israeli helicopters launch fresh attack on Beirut suburbs

Continued from Page 1

prime minister, who yesterday promised to continue the campaign "as long as is necessary".

Mr Peres, who faces a national election on May 29, has been under pressure to prove his government is tough on terrorism following a series of suicide bombings within Israel.

He said Hizbollah should not think there was "weakness" in northern Israel.

Lebanese reports suggested 12

civilians were killed and 35 wounded by Israeli attacks, while Israeli reports said four of its citizens were wounded by the Hizbollah rockets.

The conflict has prompted the evacuation of homes in northern Israel and southern Lebanon, where residents of 40 villages were advised to leave by the Israeli army.

Most of the 25,000 residents of Kiryat Shmuna, the main town in northern Israel, have fled.

The Israeli campaign has yet

to reach the level of some past pushes in southern Lebanon, but the involvement of Syrian troops risks a further escalation of the conflict. The Israeli strikes have already put strain on its difficult relations with Damascus, the de facto ruler of Lebanon, with which it had been holding peace talks since 1991.

The talks between Syria and Israel have been effectively stalled since December, with Israel officially suspending them in the wake of suicide bombings by Pal-

estinian Islamists six weeks ago which killed 58 people.

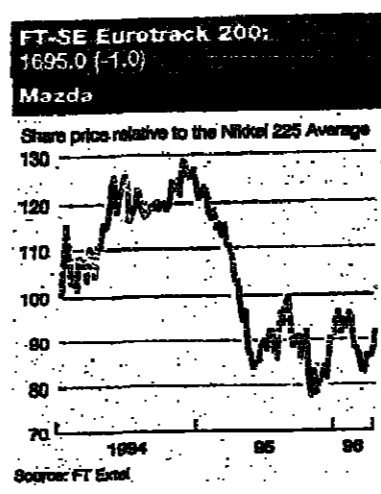
Syrian radio said Damascus was still committed to the peace process, but the attacks showed Israel was rejecting negotiations.

Israel said it launched the attacks on Hizbollah in the absence of any effort by Syria or Lebanon to rein in the militants. The present conflict appears to have changed the unwritten rules of engagement, with broader attacks now involving civilians as well as soldiers.

## THE LEX COLUMN

# Ford takes the wheel

An injection of capital and management from Ford should give a new lease of life to the rusty old model that Mazda has become. As Japan's fifth largest carmaker, it has suffered more than larger rivals from the combination of overcapacity, high costs and market saturation. Capacity utilisation at its most modern factory in western Japan is only 45 per cent and the group's vehicle output has almost halved since 1990. That has led to two years of heavy losses, while the recovery to break-even in the latest 12 months has been achieved only with the help of asset sales.



Source: FT Intel

Closer co-operation with Ford will help. Sharing product development, purchasing and some distribution should bring savings. And Mazda has low-cost production sites in south east Asia, saving Ford the trouble of establishing its own. A second level of benefits should come from co-ordinating new model ranges, with Ford likely to use Mazda platforms in Asia, and vice-versa in Europe and America. But this rather raises the question of what the two companies have been doing all these years. They have been allies since 1989 and Ford has held a significant equity stake in the Japanese group for nearly 20 years. Most recently, Ford appeared to be distancing itself from its partner by developing its own range of small cars.

For Mazda's other investors it must be galling that Ford is now increasing its stake by buying shares at a 22 per cent discount to the market price and gaining effective management control without launching a full bid. But since the alternative is probably Mazda's demise, they have no other option.

Telekom, it would have a strong argument for doing so. Telekom is a government monopoly, so C&W would effectively be renationalised via the backdoor. However, it would find itself ideologically challenged in blocking a bid from, say, BT. If it would be acceptable for C&W to sell its UK telecoms business, Mercury, to all-comers, what grounds can there be for blocking a bid for C&W itself?

However, UK government support must be the key to any buyer of C&W retaining its numerous former colonial telecom licences. And the government is bound to prefer the idea of a British Telecommunications/C&W merger. BT would emerge as an international giant, while UK competition would be enhanced by placing C&W's UK arm, Mercury, into stronger hands. In the circumstances, overseas telecoms groups are unlikely to take the risk.

## Deutsche Telekom

A Deutsche Telekom takeover of Cable and Wireless is sufficiently far-fetched that it is a wonder C&W shares reacted so enthusiastically yesterday. With DM100bn of net debt, Telekom would struggle to pay up. Besides, a reverse takeover by C&W would be impossible - Deutsche is wholly-owned by the German government - so Telekom would face substantial regulatory hurdles, such as a mandatory takeover of C&W's subsidiary Hongkong Telecom. The suggestion that Telekom might be interested can probably be interpreted as an attempt by an inefficient monopoly to portray itself as something more dynamic in the lead-up to its November flotation.

Nonetheless, the rumour raises the issue of whether the UK government would use its golden share to veto any overseas bid for C&W. In the case of

## Lonrho

By granting Anglo American Corporation an option over his 18 per cent stake in Lonrho, chief executive Mr Dieter Bock is not doing Lonrho's other shareholders any favours.

If Lonrho's demerger into mining and non-mining divisions goes ahead as planned, Anglo will end up with a 28 per cent stake in the mining arm, giving it significant influence. Its pre-emptive strike has certainly ensured that Lonrho's mining assets will not fall into other hands and its timely intervention may help to scupper the proposed merger of Lonrho's platinum interests with Anglo's rival Gencor. In time, Anglo will almost certainly use Lonrho's collection of assets to expand further into Africa from its South African base. In particular, Lonrho's stake in the Ashanti gold mine in Ghana could become the nub of an African

mining finance house. Despite those benefits, Anglo is paying Mr Bock only a 6 per cent premium to Lonrho's current market price. Lonrho argues that without a "big brother" like Anglo, the mining division would be too weak to stand on its own feet. But the speed with which Anglo has snapped up its stake suggests that Lonrho assets might have been attractive to a number of parties. Mr Bock would have done better to hold an auction rather than tying up a rather cosy deal.

## UK electricity

So Britain's generators need to get bigger if they are to compete abroad. That, at any rate, is the Alice in Wonderland logic which has persuaded the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to recommend waving through the generators' bids for regional electricity companies (recs). It is surprisingly naive. Nothing is more likely to discourage the generators from competing abroad than the prospect of more market power at home.

This is bad for independent recs. Allowing integrated businesses into the domestic market, where they will have a competitive advantage, carries grim implications for the supply business which account for about 10 per cent of recs' profits. If the regulator could be persuaded, the best option for most recs would probably be to find a buyer for their supply businesses while the going is good, concentrating instead on the much safer business of distribution.

There is not much sign of this threat in the independent recs' share prices. These rose again yesterday, and after allowing for special dividends and the distribution of shares in the National Grid, they have outperformed the market over the period of the MMC enquiry. Bid speculation is running rampant. Bidders, it is argued, have been lurking in the wings, waiting for the MMC to make up its mind. Well, maybe. But the MMC was hardly likely to ban bids from, say, US utilities, given the number which have already happened. So if foreign buyers have been waiting, all they have achieved is to allow prices to rise yet further.

Further bids are perfectly possible apart from anything else, the generators' appetites may not be satisfied with just a single rec. But with all the rec share prices - with the possible exception of Northern Electric - looking distinctly frothy, investors should only be in the shares if they want to play the bid guessing-game. If not, they should take their profits and switch into the generators.

## FT WEATHER GUIDE

### Europe today

Cold air will spread across central Europe from the north. Near the front there will be rain with snow in the Alps. Rain or snow are also expected north of the front in Poland, the Czech Republic and eastern Germany. The North Sea countries will be mostly dry with some sun, but strong north-easterly winds will keep temperatures cool. The British Isles will be mainly dry. High pressure will bring sun to most of southern Europe, but northern Spain and southern France will have isolated showers.

### Five-day forecast

Cold air from northern Europe will move towards south-eastern Europe during the next few days. Italy and the Balkans can expect thunderstorms accompanied by heavy rain, which will move into Turkey early next week. The North Sea countries and southern Scandinavia will remain sunny but windy.



### TODAY'S TEMPERATURES

Abu Dhabi	sun	36
Accra	cloudy	33
Algiers	sun	23
Amsterdam	sun	9
Athens	sun	17
Atlanta	showers	18
B. Aires	sun	23
Bham	rain	7
Bangkok	cloudy	38
Barcelona	sun	18
Beijing	sun	17
Belfast	sun	36
Belgrade	cloudy	15
Berlin	sun	4
Bermuda	cloudy	24
Bogota	sun	18
Bombay	sun	32
Buenos Aires	sun	10
Bucarest	sun	23
C. Jagan	sun	7
Cairo	cloudy	22
Cape Town	sun	29
Cardiff	rain	8
Ciudad Juarez	sun	22
Chicago	cloudy	8
Colombo	sun	9
Dakar	sun	26
Dallas	sun	32
Dhaka	sun	36
Dubai	sun	35
Dublin	sun	12
Dubrovnik	cloudy	16
Edinburgh	cloudy	7
Faro	sun	25
Frankfurt	sun	9
Geneva	sun	22
Glasgow	sun	23
Hamburg	cloudy	4
Helsinki	sun	6
Hong Kong	cloudy	21
Honolulu	sun	29
Jakarta	sun	12
Jersey	cloudy	9
Karachi	sun	36
Kuwait	thund	27
L. Angeles	sun	21
Las Palmas	showers	23
Lima	cloudy	23
Lisbon	sun	25
London	sun	9
Luxembourg	sun	8
Lyon	rain	15
Madrid	sun	19
Manila	sun	24
Marseille	cloudy	14
Medan	sun	23
Melbourne	showers	8
Mexico City	sun	26
Miami	sun	27
Montreal	sun	12
Moscow	cloudy	13
Mumbai	sun	36
Nairobi	sun	27
Naples	thund	27
Nassau	sun	21
New York	sun	23
Nice	sun	23
Nicosia	sun	21
O. Hava	sun	8
Paris	sun	12
Perth	sun	22
Prague	cloudy	8
Rangoon	sun	34
Reykjavik	windy	8
Rio	thund	29
Rome	sun	19
S. Paulo	sun	19
Seoul	sun	16
Singapore	cloudy	31
Stockholm	sun	7
Strasbourg	rain	10
Sydney	sun	23
Taipei	thund	18
Tel Aviv	sun	12
Toronto	showers	9
Vancouver	showers	13
Vladivostok	rain	16
Vladivostok	rain	16
Warsaw	cloudy	8
Warsaw	sun	5
Washington	cloudy	21
Wellington	rain	18
Winnipeg	sun	8
Zurich	rain	8

Station at 12 GMT. Temperatures maximum for day. Forecasts by Meteo Consult of the Netherlands

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